



WORLD LITERATURE READING 6

Indian Fables

About the Selection

The *Pañcatantra* was written in India about A.D. 300. It is a book of fables or short animal stories, written to teach values. "The Fate of Three Fish" is part of Book I. This book teaches the importance of working together to achieve common goals. In the fable below, two fish are able to escape danger but one is not.

Guided Reading

As you read, pay attention to the plan of each fish to avoid the fishermen's net and whether each plan is successful. Then answer the questions that follow.



Reader's Dictionary

far-sighted: having good judgment
quick-witted: intelligent
inevitable: unavoidable
sandpiper: a small bird
idly: in a lazy and careless manner

Pañcatantra: The Book of India's Folk Wisdom

'Far-sighted and Quick-witted,
 Happily did these two thrive;
 While Inevitable died.'

The lady sandpiper narrated this story:

The Fate of Three Fish:
 Far-sighted, Quick-witted, and Inevitable

In a certain large lake there once lived three big fish. They were named Far-sighted, Quick-witted, and Inevitable. One day as he was swimming in the water, Far-sighted heard a conversation between some fishermen who were passing nearby: "This lake has a lot of fish. Let us do some fishing here tomorrow."

When he heard this, Far-sighted thought to himself: "They are sure to come back. So, I will get hold of Quick-witted and Inevitable and go with them to another lake with open channels." He called his two friends together and asked them to come along.

Quick-witted replied: "If in fact the fisher folk come back here, I will save myself by some strategy that fits the circumstances."

Inevitable, whose end was near, paid no heed to Far-sighted's plea and remained idly by making no preparation for the journey. Seeing that the two were determined to remain there, Far-sighted made his way into a stream of the river and proceeded to another lake.