

15. “The King and the Fisherman Part II”

by Hartwell James
(Adaptation)

The King thought his wife’s idea was an easy way out of the problem. He commanded the fisherman to be brought before him. When the fisherman, who was a most intelligent man, stood before the King, the King said to him, “Oh fisherman, tell me, is this fish male or female?”

The fisherman replied, “The fish is neither male nor female.” The King smiled at the clever answer. To add to the Queen’s annoyance, the King directed one of his workers to give the fisherman even more money.

Then the fisherman placed the money in his leather bag and thanked the King. Swinging the bag over his shoulder, he hurried away, but not so quickly that he did not notice that he had dropped one small coin. Placing the bag on the ground, he stooped and picked up the coin. Again he went on his way, with the King and Queen carefully watching his every action.

“Look at that!” said the Queen. “He actually put down his bag to pick up one small coin. It upset him to think that the coin might reach the hands of one of the King’s servants, or go to some poor person who would buy bread and pray for the long life of the King.”

“Again you speak the truth,” replied the King. Once more the fisherman was brought into the royal courts. “Are you a human being or a beast?” the King asked him. “Although I made it possible for you to become rich without hard work, the beast within you could not allow you to leave even one small piece of money for others.” Then the King made him go forth and show his face no more within the city.

At this the fisherman fell on his knees and cried: “Hear me, O King, protector of the poor! I am your servant. May the King have a long life. I picked up the coin not for the value of it, but because on one side, it has the image of the King. I feared that someone, not seeing the coin, would tread it into the dirt, and thus defile the face of the King.”

This answer pleased the King, and he gave the fisherman another large sum of money. And the Queen was no longer angry, and she looked kindly upon the fisherman as he left with his bag heavy with money.

Word Count: 400

NAME: _____

QUESTIONS

DATE: _____

Comprehension Questions

“The King and the Fisherman Part II”

Assess each student’s comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. **Inferential** What did the fisherman do that showed he was intelligent?
 - » When the King asked him if the fish was male or female, the fisherman said it was neither male nor female. The fisherman’s response showed that he knew the King was trying to find a way to take back the money.
2. **Inferential** How did the Queen feel when the fisherman stopped to pick up the dropped coin?
 - » The Queen thought the fisherman was selfish, not wanting anyone else to get even one coin from the money the King gave him.
3. **Literal** What was the fisherman’s explanation for picking up the coin?
 - » He didn’t want anyone to accidentally step on the face of the King, which was on one side of the coin, and thus defile it.
4. **Literal** How did the King respond to the fisherman’s answer?
 - » The King was pleased with the fisherman’s answer and gave him more money.