

THE WISE MEN OF GOTHAM

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Once upon a time there were some fishermen who lived in Gotham. Listen and you will hear how wise they were or were not.

Twelve of these friends went fishing one day. Some went into the stream and some stayed on dry ground. They caught many fish and had a good time.

As they walked home, one of the men said, "We have risked much wading in that stream. I hope no one of us is drowned."

"Why, one of us might be drowned! Who knows?" cried another. "Let's see about it. Twelve of us went fishing this morning. We must count and see if twelve are returning."

So one man counted, "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven."

"Alas! One of us is drowned!" he cried.

"Woe be unto us! Let me count," said another. "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven."

"Alas! alas!" he wailed; "truly one of us is drowned!"

Then every man counted, and each one counted eleven.

"Alas! alas!" they all cried; "one of us is drowned! Which one is it?"

They went back to the shore, and they looked up and down for him that was drowned. All the time they were crying and lamenting loudly.

Another neighbor came strolling by. "What are you seeking?" he asked, "and why are you so sorrowful?"

"Oh," said they, "this day we came to fish in the stream. There were twelve of us, but one is drowned."



“Why,” said the neighbor, “count yourselves and see how many there are.”

Again they counted, and again each man counted eleven.

“Well, this is sad,” said the neighbor, who saw how the fishermen all counted eleven. “What will you give me if I find the twelfth man?”

“Sir,” cried all together, “you may have all the money we own.”

“Give me the money,” said the neighbor

Then he began to count. He gave the first man a whack over the shoulders and said, “There is one.”

He gave the next a whack and said, “There is two.” And so he counted until he came to the last man. He gave this one a sounding blow, saying, “And here is the twelfth.”

“Oh thank you!” cried all the company of twelve. “You have found our friend.”

Did the neighbor really find their friend? Was one fisherman ever lost? How do you know?