

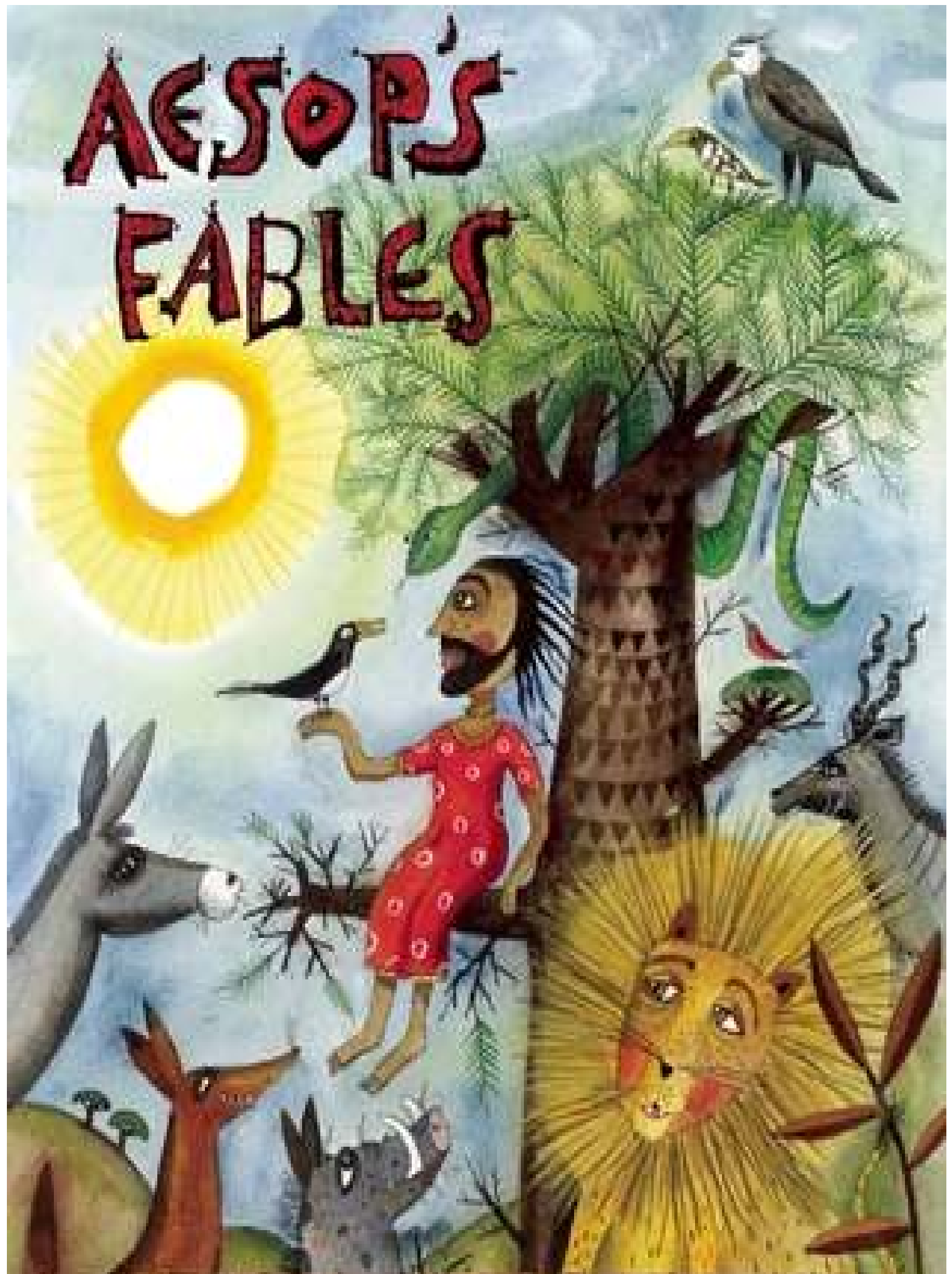
Beavering

Through



FABLES

# AESOP'S FABLES



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# The Lion and the Mouse

Once, a little mouse came upon a lion who was fast asleep. The mouse had never seen a lion close up before and was very curious to see what his great mane felt like. Very boldly, the mouse crept as nimbly as he could up the lion's leg, along his back, and all the way to his soft, thick mane. However, even though the mouse was being as light and quiet as he could, his movements woke the mighty beast. As the mouse ran back down the lion's leg, an enormous paw clamped down upon his tail. Then the lion snarled and opened his big jaws to swallow him.

"Pardon, oh King", cried the little mouse, trembling in terror. "Forgive me this time, and I shall never forget it. You never know, I may even be able to return the favour one of these days".



At this bold idea, the lion began to laugh. He was so amused at the thought of the mouse being able to help him that he let him go.

Sometime after, the lion was unlucky enough to be caught in a trap. The rejoicing hunters wanted to carry their prize alive to show their king. So they bound the injured lion and tethered him to a tree while they went in search of a wagon to carry him on.

Just then, the little mouse happened to pass by, and recognised the lion at once. Seeing his sad plight, the mouse scampered straight up to him. It was only a few moments before he had gnawed away the ropes and the lion was free. "You see?" said the little mouse. "Was I not right after all?"

**Little friends may prove great friends.**

# The Hare & The Tortoise

A hare was once boasting to the other animals about how speedy he was. "No one is faster than me", he said with a smirk. "I challenge anyone to prove me wrong – who is bold enough to race with me?"

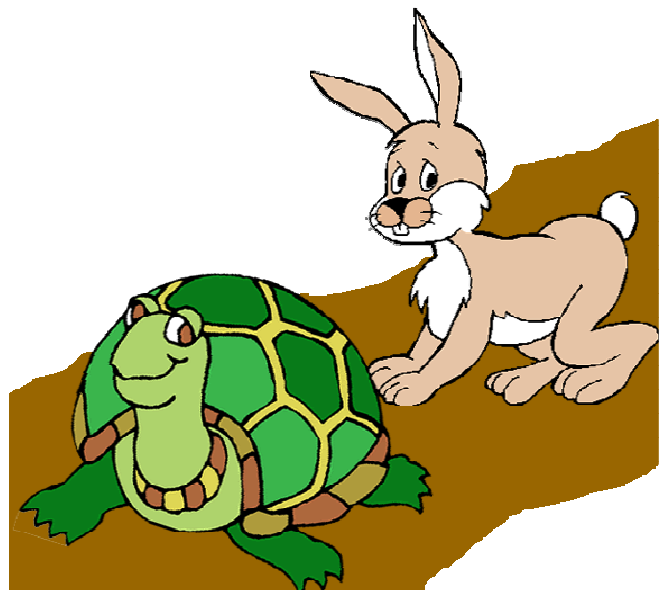
Of course, no one dared put themselves forward, until a tortoise slowly lifted his head and spoke. "I accept your challenge", the old, wrinkled one announced softly.

The hare burst out laughing. "Oh, that is funny, please tell me you are joking". But the tortoise was deadly serious. "Save your boasting until you've beaten me," he said. The other animals, astonished, rushed to set a course. It took the tortoise several minutes to amble to the start line. Some of the animals muttered to each other and shook their heads.

"Ready, set, go!" bellowed the ox, and finally the race began. The hare darted out of sight. But as soon as he had rounded the bend, he taught he'd have a laugh at the tortoise expense. He lay down under a tree and pretended to nap, just to show that he could even stop to sleep and still beat the tortoise. But in peaceful coolness, the hare really did fall fast asleep!

Slowly, slowly, the tortoise plodded on, past the sleeping hare, until the finish line was in sight. All at once the hare woke with a start, horrified. He bounded away, but the tortoise passed the finish line before he could catch up.

**Slow and steady wins the race.**



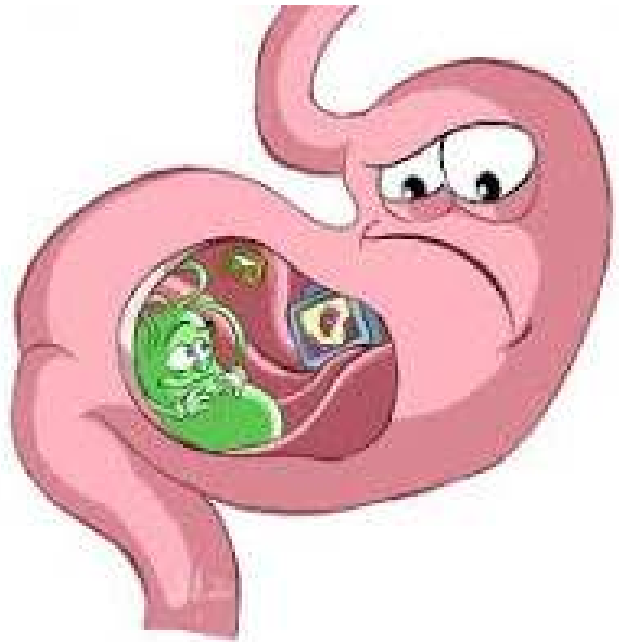
# The Belly and the Members

There was once a body in which all the parts lived together in harmony. However, one day it occurred to the legs and arms that they were doing all the work and the belly was having all the food.

Now they had noticed this, they were not happy. So the parts of the body held a meeting, and decided to go on strike until the belly agreed to take its share of the work.

So for a day or two, the hands refused to take the food, the mouth refused to receive it, and the teeth had no work to do.

The members were pleased at first and felt sure that the belly would soon give in to their demands. But they began to find that they were not working well. The hands could hardly move, the mouth was parched and dry, while the legs were unable to support the body.



The members realised that the belly had been doing the necessary work for them, even though they could not see it. They must all work together, or the body will grow sick.

**It is important to work as part of a team.**



# The Prophet

Long, long ago there were people to whom, it was believed, the gods revealed what would happen in the future. These people were called the prophets.

There was once a prophet who sat in the market-place and told the fortunes of anyone who cared to ask. People loved to hear what was going to happen to them – even if it was bad news – so he was kept busy every day.

One morning, the prophet was in the middle of telling the fortunes of a huge queue of people when a boy suddenly pushed through the crowds. The boy told the prophet that his house had been broken into by thieves, and that they had made off with everything they could lay their hands on.

The prophet jumped to his feet and rushed off, cursing the thieves. Bystanders were amused, and one said, “Our friend claims to know what is going to happen to others, but he’s not clever enough to see what’s in store for himself.”

**Only follow those who lead by example, not by empty words.**



# The Gnat and the Bull

There was once a huge bull who spent his days grazing in a field. One day, a tiny gnat came along and landed on one of the bull's horns for a rest.

The gnat found a place to his liking, and remained sitting there for a long time. He was quite nervous, for he knew that if he bothered the bull, the massive creature could kill him with a flick of his tail. However, as the bull had not said anything, he decided to boldly stay as long as he could.

Finally, the gnat had rested enough and was about to fly away, when he politely asked the bull, "Do you mind if I go now?"

The bull merely raised his eyes and said without interest, "It makes no difference to me. I didn't notice when you arrived and I won't know when you leave"

*We may be more important in our own eyes than  
in the eyes of others.*





# The Boasting Traveller

There was once a man who travelled the world. He went near and far, here and there, seeing all sorts of wonderful sights and having all kinds of fabulous adventures.

Then came the time for him to return home. He arrived back with incredible tales of all the amazing things he had seen and done in foreign countries. At first, his friends listened to the man with great interest. But, he went on and on, they grew bored with his tales and began to wonder if he was even telling the truth.

One thing the man boasted about most was a jumping competition he had entered in the Rhodes. He claimed that he had completed a long jump that no one could beat.

“Just go to Rhodes and ask the people there,” he said. “Everyone will tell you its true.”

But the man's friend said, “If you can jump as far as that, we needn't go there to prove it. Let's imagine this is Rhodes— jump now!”

**Actions speak louder than words.**



# The Mountains in Turmoil

Once upon a time, a group of villagers built their homes around the base of some towering mountains.

The mountains were like giants, huge and threatening, but the villagers did not want to move anywhere else because the earth around the mountains was rich, and crops grew well.

One day, smoke started to pour from the mountain tops, the earth began to quake and rocks came tumbling down. The people were terrified that the mountains had come to life. They felt sure that something awful was happening. Everyone huddled together, convinced they were going to die.

Suddenly the earth shook violently and a huge gap appeared in the side of the mountains. The people fell to their knees and waited for the end to come.

At long last, a teeny tiny mouse poked its head and whiskers out of the gap and came scampering towards them. And that was the end of it!

*There is often much fuss about nothing.*



# The Two Crabs

There was once a mother crab and her child, who lived on the seabed. The mother crab took their great care to teach the little crab good manners and behaviour.

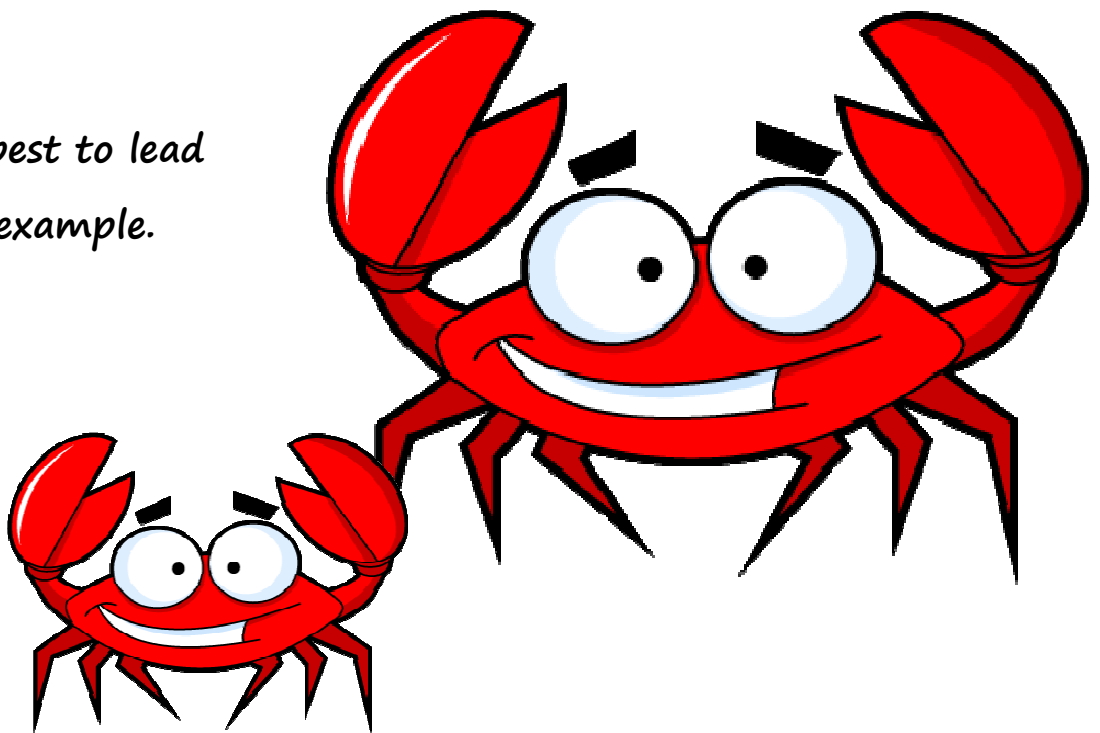
One day, the mother crab said that she would take her little one up to the shore as a treat. "But you must be on your best behaviour," she said. "I don't want all the land creatures thinking that we sea creatures are common."

"I will try, Mother," promised the little crab. So up, up, up, they went, until they reached the sandy shore. Once there, they decided to go for a stroll.

They hadn't gone far when the mother crab hissed at her child, "You are walking ungracefully. You should try to walk forward without twisting from side to side."

"I will try," said the young crab. "Please show me how and I will follow you."

*It is best to lead  
by example.*



# The Wild Boar and The Fox

A Wild Boar was sharpening his tusks busily against the stump of a tree, when a Fox happened by. Now the Fox was always looking for a chance to make fun of his neighbours. So he made a great show of looking anxiously about, as if in fear of some hidden enemy. But the Boar kept right on with his work.

"Why are you doing that?" asked the Fox at last with a grin. "There isn't any danger that I can see."

"True enough," replied the Boar, "but when danger does come there will not be time for such work as this. My weapons will have to be ready for use then, or I shall suffer for it."

*Be Prepared.*



# The Lion and The Statue

Once upon a time, a man and a lion were unlikely travelling companions on a long journey. They chatted as they went, and in the course of conversation they began to boast about how strong and bold they were, each claiming to be more courageous than the other.

“Me and my family have killed an elephant, largest of all beasts,” bragged the lion. “But I have slain a mighty stag singlehandedly,” returned the man. And so they went on, squabbling all the way, until they came to crossroads where there was a statue of a man overpowering a lion.

“There!” said the man triumphantly. “Look at that”. Doesn’t that prove that men are stronger than lions?”



“Not so fast, my friend,” said the lion, “that is only your view of the contest. If lions could make statues, you may be sure that you would see the man underneath.”

There are two sides to  
every story.

# The Fisher and The Little Fish

A fisher had once been fishing all day long and had caught nothing at all. Evening was about to draw in, but there was just time for the fisher to cast his nets one last time before going home.

When he drew the nets in, he saw that he had caught something at last. However, it was just a single little fish, which looked up at him and begged for mercy.

“Pray, let me go, master,” said the fish. “I am much too small for you to eat just now. Look at me; I am hardly going to make a bite, let alone a whole meal. If you put me back into the river, I shall soon grow much bigger, and then you can make a splendid banquet of me”.

But the fisher shook his head. “No No, my little fish,” he said. “I am very lucky to have you now. Another time, I may not get you at all.”

**A little thing in the hand is  
worth more than a great thing  
that you do not have yet.**

**Do not be greedy.**





# The Gnat and The Lion

"Away with you, vile insect!" said a Lion angrily to a Gnat that was buzzing around his head. But the Gnat was not in the least disturbed.

"Do you think," he said spitefully to the Lion, "that I am afraid of you because they call you king?"

The next instant he flew at the Lion and stung him sharply on the nose. Mad with rage, the Lion struck fiercely at the Gnat, but only succeeded in tearing himself with his claws. Again and again the Gnat stung the Lion, who now was roaring terribly. At last, worn out with rage and covered with wounds that his own teeth and claws had made, the Lion gave up the fight.

The Gnat buzzed away to tell the whole world about his victory, but instead he flew straight into a spider's web. And there, he who had defeated the King of beasts came to a miserable end, the prey of a little spider.

**No one is so great that they cannot fail.**



# Mercury and the Woodman

A poor Woodman was cutting down a tree near the edge of a deep pool in the forest. It was late in the day and the Woodman was tired. He had been working since sunrise and his strokes were not so sure as they had been early that morning. Thus it happened that the axe slipped and flew out of his hands into the pool. The Woodman was in despair. The axe was all he possessed with which to make a living, and he had not money enough to buy a new one.

As he stood wringing his hands and weeping, the god Mercury suddenly appeared and asked what the trouble was. The Woodman told what had happened, and straightway the kind Mercury dived into the pool. When he came up again he held a wonderful golden axe. "Is this your axe?" Mercury asked the Woodman. "No," answered the honest Woodman, "that is not my axe." Mercury laid the golden axe on the bank and sprang back into the pool. This time he brought up an axe of silver, but the Woodman declared again that his axe was just an ordinary one with a wooden handle. Mercury dived down for the third time, and when he came up again he had the very axe that had been lost.

The poor Woodman was very glad that his axe had been found and could not thank the kind god enough. Mercury was greatly pleased with the Woodman's honesty. "I admire your honesty," he said, "and as a reward you may have all three axes, the gold and the silver as well as your own."

The happy Woodman returned to his home with his treasures, and soon the story of his good fortune was known to everybody in the village. Now there were several Woodmen in the village who believed that they could easily win the same good fortune. They hurried out into the woods, one here, one there, and hiding their axes in the bushes, pretended they had lost them. Then they wept and wailed and called on Mercury to help them.

# Mercury and the Woodman ...

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And indeed, Mercury did appear, first to this one, then to that. To each one he showed an axe of gold, and each one eagerly claimed it to be the one he had lost. But Mercury did not give them the golden axe. Oh no! Instead he gave them each a hard whack over the head with it and sent them home. And when they returned next day to look for their own axes, they were nowhere to be found.

*Honesty is the best policy.*



# The Lioness and The Vixen



A Lioness and a Vixen were talking together about their young, as mothers will, and saying how healthy and well-grown they were, and what beautiful coats they had, and how they were the image of their parents. "My litter of cubs is a joy to see," said the Fox; and then she added, rather maliciously, "But I notice you never have more than one." "No," said the Lioness grimly, "but that one grows up to be the King of the Beasts".

*Quality, not quantity.*





# The Milkmaid and Her Pail

A Milkmaid had been out to milk the cows and was returning from the field with the shining milk pail balanced nicely on her head. As she walked along, her pretty head was busy with plans for the days to come.

"This good, rich milk," she mused, "will give me plenty of cream to churn. The butter I make I will take to market, and with the money I get for it I will buy a lot of eggs for hatching. How nice it will be when they are all hatched and the yard is full of fine young chicks. Then when May day comes I will sell them, and with the money I'll buy a lovely new dress to wear to the fair. All the young men will look at me. They will come and try to make love to me,—but I shall very quickly send them about their business!"

As she thought of how she would settle that matter, she tossed her head scornfully, and down fell the pail of milk to the ground. And all the milk flowed out, and with it vanished butter and eggs and chicks and new dress and all the milkmaid's pride

**Do not count your chicken's  
before they hatch.**



# The Dog and His Reflection

Once upon a time there was a dog who had a piece of meat. He was carrying it home in his mouth to eat in peace. On his way, he came across a running brook and he decided to trot along beside it.

As the dog walked along he looked down at the water, and then stopped in surprise. There was another dog with a piece of meat in the water! The dog had no idea it was his own reflection. His only thought was that he had to have the other piece of meat too. So he made a snap at the dog in the water, but as he opened his mouth he dropped the meat. It plopped into the brook and was swirled away downriver.

*It is very foolish to be greedy.*





# The Grasshopper and The Ants

It was proving to be a long, hard winter and all the animals were suffering from the cold, the damp and the lack of food.

The rain seemed to go on for days on end, but then, at last the sun came out and brightened the winter bleakness. As the hot rays warmed the ground, the wet earth steamed and sent up clouds of mist. Some ants came out from their mound, bringing their store of corn, grain by grain. It had got rather damp so they decided to lay it out in the sun to dry.

As the ants were hard at work fetching and carrying, along came a grasshopper who begged them to spare him a few grains as he was starving. The ants stopped work for a moment, though this was against their instincts. "May we ask, what you were doing with yourself last summer" asked the ants. "Why didn't you collect a store of food for the winter". "The fact is that I was busy singing and I did not have the time" replied the grasshopper.

"If you spent the summer singing", replied the ants, "you can't do better than spend the winter dancing". And they chuckled and went on with their work.

*It is better to be prepared in case hard times arrive.*



# The Bundle of Sticks

A certain Father had a family of Sons, who were forever quarrelling among themselves. No words he could say did the least good, so he cast about in his mind for some very striking example that should make them see that discord would lead them to misfortune.

One day when the quarrelling had been much more violent than usual and each of the Sons was moping in a surly manner, he asked one of them to bring him a bundle of sticks. Then handing the bundle to each of his Sons in turn he told them to try to break it. But although each one tried his best, none was able to do so.

The Father then untied the bundle and gave the sticks to his Sons to break one by one. This they did very easily. "My Sons," said the Father, "do you not see how certain it is that if you agree with each other and help each other, it will be impossible for your enemies to injure you? But if you are divided among yourselves, you will be no stronger than a single stick in that bundle."

**Strength lies in united numbers.**



# The Crow and the Pitcher

In a spell of dry weather, when the Birds could find very little to drink, a thirsty Crow found a pitcher with a little water in it. But the pitcher was high and had a narrow neck, and no matter how he tried, the Crow could not reach the water. The poor thing felt as if he must die of thirst.

Then an idea came to him. Picking up some small pebbles, he dropped them into the pitcher one by one. With each pebble the water rose a little higher until at last it was near enough so he could drink.

*Little by little does the trick.*



# The Four Oxen and The Lion

A Lion used to prowl about a field in which Four Oxen used to dwell. Many a time he tried to attack them; but whenever he came near they turned their tails to one another, so that whichever way he approached them he was met by the horns of one of them. At last, however, they fell and had a quarrel among themselves, and each went off to pasture alone in a separate corner of the field. Then the Lion attacked them one by one and soon made an end of all four.

*United we stand, divided we fall.*



# The Fox and The Stork

The Fox one day thought of a plan to amuse himself at the expense of the Stork, at whose odd appearance he was always laughing. "You must come and dine with me today," he said to the Stork, smiling to himself at the trick he was going to play. The Stork gladly accepted the invitation and arrived in good time and with a very good appetite. For dinner the Fox served soup. But it was set out in a very shallow dish, and all the Stork could do was to wet the very tip of his bill. Not a drop of soup could he get. But the Fox lapped it up easily, and, to increase the disappointment of the Stork, made a great show of enjoyment.

The hungry Stork was much displeased at the trick, but he was a calm, even-tempered fellow and saw no good in flying into a rage. Instead, not long afterward, he invited the Fox to dine with him in turn. The Fox arrived promptly at the time that had been set, and the Stork served a fish dinner that had a very appetizing smell. But it was served in a tall jar with a very narrow neck. The Stork could easily get at the food with his long bill, but all the Fox could do was to lick the outside of the jar, and sniff at the delicious odour. And when the Fox lost his temper, the Stork said calmly: "Do not play tricks on your neighbours unless you can stand the same treatment yourself"

**Treat others as you wish to be treated.**





# The Boy who cried 'Wolf'

*There was a boy tending the sheep who would continually go up to the embankment and shout, 'Help, there's a wolf!' The farmers would all come running only to find out that what the boy said was not true. Then one day there really was a wolf but when the boy shouted, they didn't believe him and no one came to his aid. The whole flock was eaten by the wolf.*

*A liar will not be believed, even when he speaks the truth.*

