

# **The Complete Fables Study Guide**

## **The Complete Fables by Aesop**

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# Plot Summary

The name Aesop calls many images to mind. The mind's eye immediately sees a tortoise beating a hare in a race or a little boy who cries wolf to the vexation of his fellow villagers. This collection of fables asks the reader to put those children's stories from his or her mind. Morals, such as "haste makes waste" and "don't cry over spilled milk," do not exist in this world of Aesop. This collection is an academic look at the folklore creations credited to Aesop. Far from child-like moral lessons one would expect, these fables are mainly jokes and one-liners. The fables range from crude to witty to vulgar to wise.

The translators of these tales want the readers to know that the morals are not an original part of the fables. Orators trying to convince their audience of their point added morals later. This book is a compilation of 358 fables. The fables give voice to animals, inanimate objects and the gods as though it were an everyday occurrence. The wily fox outsmarts men and the tiny cicada outsmarts the fox in his turn. The gods answer appeals to the lowest forms of life and supply ironic punishments to the higher ones.

The fables themselves are more like jokes with punch lines than moral tales of ethics and wrongdoings. Littered with obscure puns, the notes save this work from confusion while adding more confusion to the provided moral. There are the recognized fables such as "The Tortoise and the Hare," and there are the more obscure ones like "The Raven and Hermes." Each tale has a singular wit that one associates with Aesop.

The book itself makes no definitive statements about who really authored the works. It only makes educated guesses regarding the origins of certain fables. Some tales have Aesop as a character rather than the author. Others contain ancient names for animals such as the chough or the jackdaw. Cowherds converse with wolves, and trees boast among themselves. Dogs make friends with roosters, and lions lose meals due to their own greed. Gods dole out punishments and get their own comeuppance at the hands of lesser beings.

There are also tales of creation. There are mythological tales of the gods creating men and animals for specific reasons. There are stories explaining the physiology of certain animals and the psychological make up of humans. Some of these are anecdotes, and others are jokes. Most of them have a moral attached, while others leave the moral for the reader to decide.

These are not the tales of childhood. These are jokes, one liners, crude stories and sometimes, moral entreaties.



# Fables 1-5

## Fables 1-5 Summary

(1) "The Good and Bad Things" Ill Fortune and Good Fortune ask Zeus how they should treat men. Zeus tells them to appear one at a time. The bad things assail men constantly; the good things take longer to arrive. (2) "The Man Selling a Holy Statue" A merchant sells a statue of Hermes and tries to convince the buyer that it will bring him good luck. The merchant says he needs money immediately, and the statue is slow to bring good fortune. (3) "The Eagle and the Fox" An eagle and a fox live close together. The eagle eats the fox's cubs one day. The fox wants revenge. The eagle steals some entrails from a burning sacrifice and the embers set her nest on fire. Her children fall out, and the fox eats them in front of her. (4) "The Eagle and the Scarab Beetle" A scarab beetle begs an eagle to spare a hare's life. The eagle eats the hare in front of the beetle. The beetle vows revenge and destroys the eggs whenever he finds the eagle's nest. Zeus allows the eagle to lay eggs on his lap. The beetle drops dung on Zeus's lap, and Zeus destroys the eggs trying to brush off the dung. (5) "The Eagle the Jackdaw and the Shepherd" An eagle flies off with a lamb. A jackdaw sees it and tries to fly off with a ram but gets his talons stuck in the ram's fleece. A shepherd rescues the jackdaw, clips its wings and gives it to his children for a pet.

## Fables 1-5 Analysis

The editor's note explains that most of these fables are actually jokes. The first explains why human beings suffer constantly. The second shows a shady businessman exaggerating to sell a product. The third fable shows the savagery of ancient times with the fox eating the eagle's young in front of her. The scarab beetle in the fourth fable shows that even the smallest creatures can exact revenge for bad deeds. The fifth fable warns what happens when one tries to be something they aren't.



# Fables 6-10

## Fables 6-10 Summary

(6) "The Eagle With the Clipped Wings and the Fox" A man catches an eagle and clips its wings. He sells the eagle. The new owner heals the eagle's wings and sets him free. The eagle brings the man a gift in return. A fox, seeing everything, tells the eagle to give the gift to the man who first captured him. (7) "The Eagle Hit by an Arrow" A man shoots an eagle with an arrow. The eagle looks down and sees the arrow is made with eagle feathers. (8) "The Nightingale and the Hawk" A nightingale is caught by a hawk and begs for her life. She says that she is too small for the hawk and he should let her go to find something larger. The hawk says he would be a fool to give up what he has for something he hasn't seen. (9) "The Nightingale and the Swallow" A swallow tells a nightingale to roost under the roof of men's homes. The nightingale, not wanting to become a meal, declines. (10) "The Athenian Debtor" A debtor tries to sell a sow to pay back his creditor. He boasts about his sow's fertility to a prospective buyer, and the creditor uses sarcasm to prove the debtor a liar.

## Fables 6-10 Analysis

In fable 6, the fox warns the eagle to make nice with his original captor so that the man won't be tempted to catch him again. In fable 7, the eagle experiences the painful irony and humiliation of being killed by an arrow decorated with eagle's feathers. Fable 8 illustrates Ben Franklin's famous quote, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." According to the editor's note, ancient Greeks used to eat nightingales. This explains the reluctance of the nightingale to roost under the roof of a man in fable 9. The creditor does himself a disservice in fable 10 by calling the debtor a liar. Now, there is no buyer, and the debtor still owes him money.





## Fables 11-15

### Fables 11-15 Summary

(11) "The Ethiopian" A man buys an Ethiopian slave and tries to scrub the color from his skin. (12) "The Cat and the Cock" A cat wants an excuse for eating a rooster. He gives all kinds of reasons, but the rooster refutes them. The cat stops trying to justify it and eats the rooster. (13) "The Cat and the Mice" A cat pretends to be dead to trick some mice out of their hole. The mice aren't fooled and tell him so. (14) "The Cat and the Hens" A cat disguises himself as a doctor and goes to visit some hens. The hens tell him they will be fine once he leaves. (15) "The Goat and the Goatherd" A goatherd is trying to get his goats back to their fold. One goat ignores him, so he throws a rock at it and breaks its horn. The goatherd begs the goat not to tell his master what happened. The goat replies that his broken horn cannot be hidden.

### Fables 11-15 Analysis

In fable 11, a man works until he is sick trying to change something that cannot be changed. Fables 12, 13, and 14 are simple jokes with punch lines. These fables are reminiscent of cartoons. Fable 15 shows that a person should be willing to face the consequences of his actions, especially when those actions are obvious.



## Fables 16-20

### Fables 16-20 Summary

(16) "The Goat and the Donkey" A jealous goat tells a donkey to fake an epileptic fit. That way, the donkey can get some rest from his work. The donkey does and badly bruises himself. The vet prescribes goat lung, so the farmer sacrifices the goat. (17) "The Goatherd and the Wild Goats" A goatherd sees wild goats mixing with his. He herds them all together. He plans to keep the wild goats, so he gives them better food than his own. He lets them out to pasture, and the wild goats run away. They don't trust a man who treats strangers better than his friends. (18) "The Ugly Slave Girl and Aphrodite" A master is in love with his ugly and bad natured slave and holds her above his wife. Every night the girl prays for Aphrodite to make her beautiful. Aphrodite refuses because the girl's master already thinks the girl is beautiful. (19) "Aesop in the Dockyard" Aesop goes to the dockyard and is insulted by the workers. He tells them that with one command from Zeus, they will be out of a job. (20) "The Two Cocks and the Eagle" Two cockerels fight and one beats the other. The loser hides in the bushes. The winner crows loudly from the top of a wall. An eagle carries off the winner.

### Fables 16-20 Analysis

These fables deal with covetousness and the consequences of guilt. The goat's jealousy causes his own downfall in fable 16. The goatherd in fable 17 is motivated by greed. He mistreats his goats in favor of the wild ones. The slave girl is punished because her master worships her above his wife in fable 18. Her fault is worse because she is both ugly and of low birth.



# Fables 21-25

## Fables 21-25 Summary

(21) "The Cocks and the Partridge" A man buys a partridge and puts it in with his cockerels. The cocks peck at the partridge, and the partridge believes it is because she is a different species. Then she notices that the cocks pick at each other until they draw blood, and she feels better. (22) "The Fishermen and the Tunny-fish" A tunny-fish tries to escape a predator and jumps into some fishermen's boat. The fishermen, who hadn't been having much luck, take the fish back to the village and sell it. (23) "The Fisherman Who Caught a Stone" Some fisherman rejoice at how heavy their net is. They find the net is filled with stones and realize they had false hopes. (24) "The Fisherman Who Played the Flute" A fisherman packs his flute and his net. At first, he plays thinking to lure the fish. It doesn't work, so he casts his net and catches many fish. He sees the fish wiggling and wonders that they dance when there is no music. (25) "The Fisherman and the Large and Small Fish" A fisherman pulls his net from the sea. He catches a big fish, but the small fish slips through the net and escapes.

## Fables 21-25 Analysis

Fable 21 shows that some animals have naturally combative natures. Fable 22 shows that sometimes luck provides when hard work doesn't. In fable 23, a fisherman realizes how important it is not to get his hopes up. The fisherman in fable 24 finds out that it is best to be practical. Fable 25 shows that sometimes it's better to be smaller.



## Fables 26-30

### Fables 26-30 Summary

(26) "The Fisherman and the Picarel" A fisherman pulls a small picarel from the water. The picarel asks to be thrown back, saying she will return when she is larger and he can make a bigger profit from her. He refuses to let go of a fish he has already caught for one he may never see again. (27) "The Fisherman Who Beat the Water" A fisherman beats the water with a stone to lead fish into his net. A man from the area accuses him of muddying the water they must drink. The fisherman says he cannot catch fish without muddying up the water. (28) "The Halcyon" A halcyon makes her nest on a rock sticking out from the sea. She goes in search of food. She returns and finds the sea has risen and drowned her nest. (29) "The Foxes on the Bank of the Maeander River" Some foxes approach the river to drink. They are afraid of the rushing current and hesitate. One of the foxes accuses the others of cowardice. He goes to drink, and the current pulls him away. He tells the others he has an important appointment and will be back later. (30) "The Fox with a Swollen Stomach" A fox finds food in the hollow of an oak tree. He crawls in and eats it. His stomach swells, and he can't get it out. Another fox approaches and tells him to wait until he is the same size he was before he climbed in.

### Fables 26-30 Analysis

Fables 26 and 27 show contradicting personalities of fishermen. In fable 26, the fisherman is practical enough to hold on to what he catches. In fable 27, the fisherman is impractical in catching the fish and also disturbs others without caring. In fable 28, a halcyon learns that there are dangers where she least expects it. Fable 29 shows a fox that cannot bear to have his friends know he made a mistake, so he lies to his own detriment. Fable 30 is another joke with a standard punch line. Fables 29 and 30 mark the beginning of the fox fables.



## Fables 31-35

### Fables 31-35 Summary

(31) "The Fox and the Bramble" A fox jumps a fence and slips. He grabs a bramble to keep from falling, and it sticks in his paw. The bramble tells him not to cling to something that clings to everything else. (32) "The Fox and the Bunch of Grapes" A fox sees a bunch of grapes too high up for him to reach. The fox walks away saying the grapes are sour. (33) "The Fox and the Huge Serpent" A fox, envying the serpent's great length, lies down beside the serpent and tries to elongate his own body. He tries so hard that he stretches himself too far and splits his body. (34) "The Fox and the Woodcutter" A fox is chased by hunters and asks a woodcutter to hide him. The woodcutter lets the fox hide in his hut. He tells the hunters he doesn't know where the fox is while pointing to the house. The hunters take him at his word and leave. The fox berates the man for his deceit. (35) "The Fox and the Crocodile" A fox and a crocodile brag to each other. The crocodile says his ancestors were gymnasts. The fox responds that the crocodile must have cracked his skin from stretching so much.

### Fables 31-35 Analysis

The first three fables show the foolishness of the fox. He tries to save himself by holding on to something that holds on to everything else. Rather than trying to get the grapes out of his reach, he calls them sour and walks away. He tries so hard to emulate a snake that he kills himself. In fable 34, one sees a wiser fox. He knows that the woodcutter tried to betray him and was not fooled by the man's claims of innocence.



## Fables 36-40

### Fables 36-40 Summary

(36) "The Fox and the Dog" A fox grabs a lamb and tells the dog he is just teasing and playing with it. The dog tells him to stop, or he will feel the caresses of a dog. (37) "The Fox and the Leopard" A fox and a leopard compare their appearance. The leopard says he is beautiful because of his coat's variety. The fox replies he is varied in his soul as well as his body. (38) "The Fox and the Monkey Elected King" A monkey is elected king, and a jealous fox sets a trap for him. The fox tricks the monkey into the trap and tells him he is too foolish to rule over all the animals. (39) "The Fox and the Monkey Dispute Their Nobility" A fox and a monkey brag about their nobility. The monkey points to a nearby cemetery and says they are his noble ancestors. The fox says that none of them can contradict the monkey's claims. (40) "The Fox and the Billy Goat" A fox falls in a well and a billy goat passes by. The fox invites the goat to come down for a drink and praises the water. The goat goes down the well. The fox climbs up the goat and out of the well. He calls the goat stupid for going down the well without thinking of how to get out.

### Fables 36-40 Analysis

With the exception of fable 36, this group of fables shows how wily and intelligent the fox is. In fable 36, the dog is not fooled.



# Fables 41-45

## Fables 41-45 Summary

(41) "The Fox with the Cropped Tail" A fox, his tail cut short by a trap, tries to convince the other foxes to cut their tails. One of the foxes says that the first fox would not ask them to do this if it weren't in his own best interest. (42) "The Fox Who Had Never Seen a Lion" A fox sees a lion for the first time and fears he will die of fright. He sees the lion a second time and is less frightened. The third time he sees the lion, he strikes up a conversation. (43) "The Fox and the Monster Mask" A fox creeps into an actor's house, and after rummaging through the wardrobe, he finds a large beautifully made monster's mask. He says it has a fearsome face, but it doesn't have a brain. (44) "The Two Men Who Quarreled About the Gods" Two men quarrel about whether the god Theseus or the god Herakles was the greater. The two gods lose their temper with the men and revenge themselves on the countries of both men. (45) "The Murderer" The parents of a murder victim pursue the murderer. The murderer arrives at the edge of the Nile and comes face to face with a wolf. Terrified, he climbs a tree at the waterside and finds a huge snake slithering towards him. The man drops from the tree into the river, where a crocodile eats him.

## Fables 41-45 Analysis

The fox tales end with fable 43, but the fox does appear later. Fables 41 and 43 further show the fox's intellect and wit. Fable 42 teaches that fear lessens with familiarity. Fable 44 begins the series of fables about men. Two men invoke gods against each other only to have both their villages destroyed. Fable 45 shows that one cannot escape a heinous crime.



## Fables 46-50

### Fables 46-50 Summary

(46) "The Man Who Promised the Impossible" A poor and ill man appeals to the gods. He promises them large sacrifices in exchange for his life. His wife asks him where he will get the money to pay for the sacrifice. He says the gods will not save his life just to call him to account. (47) "The Coward and the Ravens" A coward hears some ravens on his way to war and drops his weapons from fright. When he hears them a second time, he swears that he will not be a meal for them, no matter how loud they crow. (48) "The Man Bitten by an Ant, and Hermes" A man sees a shipwreck and calls the gods unjust for killing so many people to get one impious one. An ant bites the man, and he kills all the ants to get the one who bit him. The god Hermes tells him that the situations are the same. (49) "The Husband and the Troublesome Wife" A man's wife is rude to all of the servants. He sends her to her father's house and questions her when she returns. She says the herdsmen and shepherds scowled at her. The husband realizes it's no wonder that the servants, who spend the whole day with his wife, dislike her, since she displeased the herdsmen and shepherds, who were away from dawn until dusk. (50) "The Mischievous Man" A man wants to prove the Oracle of Delphi is a fraud. He hides a sparrow under his cloak and asks the Oracle if it is alive or dead. If the Oracle says it is alive, he will crush it to death. If the oracle says it is dead, he will show it to him. The Oracle says it is up to the man whether the sparrow lives or dies.

### Fables 46-50 Analysis

Fable 46 shows that it is futile to make false promises. Fable 47 shows that fear of a greater evil can give man courage. Fable 48 shows how easily the gods can destroy man. Fable 49 shows that a rude person is rude no matter where he or she goes. Fable 50 shows that the man cannot trick the Oracle.





# Fables 51-55

## Fables 51-55 Summary

(51) "The Braggart" A man is tired of being called unmanly and leaves his village. He returns and claims to have jumped further than Olympian athletes. He says he can prove it when a witness comes to their country. Someone tells him to just make the jump now and prove it once and for all. (52) "The Middle-aged Man and His Mistresses" A middle aged man has gray hair and two mistresses. The older one plucks out his dark hairs, and the younger one plucks out his gray hairs. The man goes bald from all the plucking. (53) "The Shipwrecked Man" A violent storm rises and capsizes a ship. The passengers swim for safety while one man prays to Athena. Another passenger tells the man to pray if he wants, but to also swim. (54) "The Blind Man" A blind man can recognize things by touch. Someone hands him a wolf cub. He is not sure if it is a wolf or a fox, but he is sure that it should be kept away from sheep. (55) "The Cheat" A poor man who is ill promises a huge sacrifice to gods if they will cure him. They cure him, but he has no money to make his offering. The gods send him a dream telling him to go to seashore and the result will be a thousand drachmas for him. He goes and runs into some pirates, who sell him into slavery for one thousand drachmas.

## Fables 51-55 Analysis

According to fable 51, boasting is meaningless if one cannot back up his claim. A middle-aged man learns that two mistresses will cause him to lose his hair in fable 52. Fable 53 shows that the gods help those who help themselves. Fable 54 shows that the nature of something is evident even to the blind. Fable 55 shows the harm that can come of lying to the gods.



## Fables 56-60

### Fables 56-60 Summary

(56) "The Charcoal Burner and the Fuller" A charcoal burner asks a fuller to move in with him so that they can share expenses. The fuller refuses, saying the burner will get soot over everything he cleans. (57) "The Men and Zeus" Men ask Zeus why they were not granted the same gifts of speed and power as the animals. Zeus says that he gave man the gift of speech, which gods favor more. From that point on, the men are grateful. (58) "The Man and the Fox" A man captures a fox and ties a rope dipped in oil around its tail. He then sets fire to the rope. The fox runs into the man's fields and sets fire to the man's crops. The man chases the fox and laments his poor fortune. (59) "The Man and the Lion Traveling Together" A man and lion travel together and argue about which of them is the strongest. Along the way, they pass a statue of a man strangling a lion. The man points to the statue and says it is proof that men are stronger. The lion replies that if lions could make statues, the roles would be reversed. (60) "The Man and the Satyr" A man befriends a satyr. During the winter, the satyr sees the man blow on his hands. The man says it is to warm them. When they are served a hot meal, the satyr sees the man blow on his food to cool it. The satyr tells the man that he cannot be friends with a man who blows hot and cold.

### Fables 56-60 Analysis

According to fable 56, there are certain types of people that cannot live together in harmony. In fable 57, Zeus explains that man is held highest of all creatures because of his ability to converse. Fable 58 teaches that ill deeds come back to haunt their perpetrator. Fable 59 shows that history is written by the winner. Fable 60 is a play on words to show how changeable man's nature is.

# Fables 61-65

## Fables 61-65 Summary

(61) "The Man Who Shattered a Statue of a God" A man prays to a wooden statue of a god every day. He asks the statue to end his poverty. He gets so frustrated by nothing happening that he breaks the statue open one day, and gold comes pouring out of it. He curses the statue, saying that when he prayed it did nothing, but when he destroyed it, it provided him with wealth. (62) "The Man Who Found a Golden Lion" A timid miser finds a statue of a lion made from pure gold but does not take it. Although he wants the riches, he is too afraid to take it for fear of bad luck. He decides to let his servants take it. His plan is to watch from a distance while the servants take the statue. (63) "The Bear and the Fox" A bear brags that he has a great love of mankind and that is why he never eats a corpse. The fox wishes the bear would love mankind enough to eat the dead and not mangle the living. (64) "The Ploughman and the Wolf" A ploughman takes his oxen from their harness and leads them to water. A hungry fox comes along and begins to lick the harness. He gets his head stuck in the harness, and the ploughman finds him. The ploughman wishes the fox would work rather than steal. (65) "The Astronomer" An astronomer is looking at the sky and falls into a well. A passerby sees him and tells him that he should pay less attention to the sky and more attention to what is on the ground.

## Fables 61-65 Analysis

Fables 61 and 62 deal with wealth and how men react to it. In the first one, the man prays for wealth but does not receive it until he takes action. In fable 62, a man is too timid to take found wealth and watches as others walk away with it. In fable 63, a fox calls a bear a hypocrite. Fable 65 shows how important it is to pay attention to one's surroundings.



## Fables 66-70

### Fables 66-70 Summary

(66) "The Frogs Who Demanded a King" The frogs demand Zeus give them a new king. Zeus throws a stick into the water, and the frogs are at first afraid and then show no respect for it. They ask Zeus for another king, as they cannot respect the stick he sent down. Zeus sends a water snake down, and it eats the frogs. (67) "The Neighbour Frogs" A frog lives in a deep pond far from the track. Her neighbor lives in a stagnant pool on the track. The one from the pond asks the one from the track to move in with her. The one from the track says she is comfortable where she is. A chariot passes along the track and kills her. (68) "The Frogs in the Pond" Two frogs live in a pond that has dried up. While searching for water, they find a well. One frog suggests they both go down. The other frog wants to know how they will get out if the water in the well dries up. (69) "The Frog Doctor and the Fox" A frog yells out that he is a doctor and knows all remedies. A fox asks him how he can save others when he cannot cure his own limp. (70) "The Oxen and the Axle" Some oxen who are pulling a cart hear the axle creak. They turn around and say that since they do all the work, the axle has no right to complain.

### Fables 66-70 Analysis

Fable 66 shows that one should not ask too much of the gods. Fable 67 shows how laziness can cause one's death. Fable 68 teaches that one must be mindful of all aspects of survival.



# Fables 71-75

## Fables 71-75 Summary

(71) "The Three Oxen and the Lion" Three oxen always graze together. A lion, wanting to eat them, laments the fact that the three are never apart. He sets the three against each other with slanderous statements. The oxen separate, and the lion eats them one by one. (72) "The Ox-driver and Herakles" As an ox-driver brings his wagon toward a town, the wagon falls into a deep ravine. Instead of trying to get the wagon out, the driver invokes Herakles. Herakles appears and tells him to put some of his own effort in rather than invoking the gods in vain. (73) "The North Wind and the Sun" The North Wind and the Sun have a contest to see who can get a traveler to remove his clothes. The North Wind blows as hard as he can, but the man wraps his clothes tightly about him. The Sun shines down as hot as he can, and the man removes his clothes to go swimming. (74) "The Cowherd and the Lion" A cowherd loses a calf and promises a sacrifice if Zeus will show him the thief. The cowherd finds a lion eating the calf and promises a larger sacrifice if Zeus will save him from the lion's claws. (75) "The Linnet and the Bat" A linnet sings during the night. A bat hears him and asks why he waits until nighttime to sing. The linnet says that he was caught during the day because of his singing, so now he only sings at night. The bat says he is too late to be safe, since he is already caught.

## Fables 71-75 Analysis

Fable 71 shows that there is safety in numbers. It also shows what can happen when one lets a stranger divide his friends. Fable 72 shows that the gods do not help those who pray in vain and do nothing to help themselves. Fable 73 shows that kindness goes further than violence.



## Fables 76-80

### Fables 76-80 Summary

(76) "The House-ferret and Aphrodite" A house-ferret falls in love with a man and begs Aphrodite to change her into a girl. Aphrodite does, and the ferret and man get married. Aphrodite wants to see if the girl's nature has changed with her appearance. She releases a mouse in the wedding chamber, and the girl, true to her house-ferret nature, chases it. Aphrodite changes the girl back into a ferret. (77) "The House-ferret and the File" A house-ferret slips into a blacksmith's workshop and licks a file. Her tongue bleeds as she delights in thinking she is extracting something from the iron. She loses her tongue as a result. (78) "The Old Man and Death" An old man has a long journey ahead of him. He lays down his burden and prays for Death to come to him. Death asks why he was summoned. The old man says he wants Death to lift up his burden. (79) "The Ploughman and the Eagle" A ploughman finds an eagle in his net and sets him free. The eagle is grateful and wants to return the favor. The eagle sees a wall is about to collapse and distracts the man away from it by stealing his headband. The man returns to the wall and, seeing it in ruins, is grateful to the eagle for saving his life. (80) "The Ploughman and the Dogs" A ploughman is confined to his farm without food. He eats his sheep and then his goats. He turns to his oxen next, and some dogs see this and decide to leave. They say that if he will eat the animals that work hard for him, he will surely eat his pets next.

### Fables 76-80 Analysis

Fable 76 shows that an animal cannot change its nature no matter how beautiful it is. Fable 78 shows that death can end all burdens. Fable 79 shows that grateful people never forget to return a favor.



## Fables 81-85

### Fables 81-85 Summary

(81) "The Ploughman and the Snake Who Had Killed his Son" A snake bites and kills a ploughman's son. The ploughman waits outside the snake's hole ready to chop off its head. The snake sticks his head out of the hole, but the ploughman misses and leaves a large gash in a nearby rock. The snake says that the ploughman will never forgive his act, and he will always hate the ploughman whenever he sees the destroyed rock. (82) "The Ploughman and the Frozen Snake" A ploughman finds a frozen snake and takes pity on it. He puts it under his shirt to warm it. The snake wakes up and bites the ploughman. The ploughman thinks he deserves his fate for saving such a wicked animal. (83) "The Farmer and His Children" A farmer lies on his deathbed and tells his children to dig in the vineyard to find what he has buried there. The children, believing they will find a treasure, hoe the ground deeply. They never find a treasure, but the vineyard gives fruit many times over from their digging. (84) "The Ploughman and Chance" A ploughman hoes the field and finds a lot of gold. He praises Mother Earth for the fortune. The goddess of Chance appears and tells him he should thank her for the fortune because he will blame her if things go wrong. (85) "The Ploughman and the Tree" A ploughman has a tree that is barren and is only a roost to sparrows and cicadas. He decides to cut it down even though the sparrows and cicadas beg him not to. As he chops, he finds honey in the hollow of the tree. The man throws down the ax and honors the tree from that point forward.

### Fables 81-85 Analysis

In fable 81, a ploughman learns that revenge does not ease the pain of loss. In fable 82, a farmer teaches his children that treasure can be found in hard work. In fable 85, a man is motivated by his greed to take care of a barren tree.



## Fables 86-90

### Fables 86-90 Summary

(86) "The Ploughman's Quarrelsome Sons" A ploughman wants his sons to stop fighting. He gives them each a bundle of firewood and asks them to break it. They can't. He tells them to break the sticks one at a time, and it works. He explains that if they stick together they are indestructible. If they stand separate, they will break easily. (87) "The Old Woman and the Doctor" An old woman has bad eyesight. She agrees on a fee with her doctor. Each time the doctor visits, he steals a piece of furniture. When he has taken all of her furniture, he asks for his fee. The woman refuses, and he takes her to court. The woman tells the judge that before the doctor started visiting, she could see every piece of furniture in her house. Now that he is done, she can't see any of it. (88) "The Wife and Her Drunken Husband" A woman with a drunken husband decides to play a trick on him. He passes out, and she takes him to the cemetery and locks him in a vault. She knocks on the vault the next morning, saying that she is bringing food for the dead. He says that he would rather have a drink. She realizes that even in death, drinking is the only thing he worries about. (89) "The Woman and Her Servants" A widow has several young servants. She wakes them each morning when the rooster crows. The servants, tired of getting up so early, kill the rooster. Without the rooster to tell time, the widow wakes her servants up earlier. (90) "The Woman and the Hen" A widow's hen lays an egg once a day. The woman, imagining that she can get more eggs, decides to give the hen more barley. The hen gains so much weight from the extra food that she is unable to lay any eggs at all.

### Fables 86-90 Analysis

A ploughman shows his sons that they are strong when they are united and weak when they are separated in fable 86. In fable 87, a doctor learns that it is wrong to prey on the sick, and the story ends with a joke. Fable 88 shows that the drunken husband has lost interest in everything except drink, even his own life. In fable 89, the servants misidentify the real problem, which is the woman, not the rooster. In fable 90, a woman learns that greed will always kill any chance of good fortune.





# Fables 91-95

## Fables 91-95 Summary

(91) "The Sorceress" A sorceress sells charms to appease angry gods. Someone accuses her of making innovations in religion, and she is sentenced to death. (92) "The Heifer and the Ox" A heifer sees an ox at work in the field and pities him. A funeral procession passes by, and the heifer is prepared for sacrifice. The ox understands that the heifer did not have to work because she was intended for sacrifice. (93) "The Cowardly Hunter and the Woodcutter" A hunter, searching for the tracks of a lion, asks a woodcutter for help. The woodcutter offers to show him where the lion is. The hunter says he is only looking for the tracks, not the lion. (94) "The Young Pig and the Sheep" A pig mingles with sheep. A shepherd grabs him, and he squeals while trying to get away. The sheep chastise him. He says that when the shepherd grabs the sheep, it is for their wool, but when he grabs the pig, it is for his flesh. (95) "The Dolphins, the Whales and the Gudgeon" Dolphins and whales fight. A gudgeon tries to make peace, but a dolphin says that they would rather fight to the death.

## Fables 91-95 Analysis

Fable 92 shows that all creatures have hardships, and those who think that they are lucky may suffer in the end for their fortune. In fable 93, the hunter's folly is focusing on the process of hunting instead of the goal. Fable 94 shows that one should not look down on someone who is afraid, especially if the fear is justified.



## Fables 96-100

### Fables 96-100 Summary

(96) "The Orator Demades" Demades tells a fable by Aesop. He stops his story, and a man asks what happened to the god in the story. Demades says that Demeter is angry with the man for listening to fables rather than working. (97) "Diogenes and the Bald Man" A bald man insults the cynic philosopher Diogenes. Diogenes tells the man that he has no right to criticize since he has no hair on his head. (98) "Diogenes on a Journey" Diogenes comes to a rushing river he cannot cross. A local man comes to his aid and carries him across. Diogenes is about to thank him when the man goes to carry another traveler across. Diogenes says the man is acting out of compulsion, not kindness. (99) "The Oak Trees and Zeus" Oak trees, tired of being cut down, appeal to Zeus for help. Zeus says that it is the trees' fault for being so useful to carpenters. (100) "The Woodcutters and the Pine Tree" Woodcutters use pine wedges to split a pine tree. The pine tree dreads the wedge made from his wood more than he does the ax.

### Fables 96-100 Analysis

In fable 96, a witty orator shows that hard work is more powerful than words. This fable is self-reflexive, since it is a fable that criticizes listening to fables. Fable 98 shows that the man's actions are a result of his nature. In fable 99, the oak tree learns that his nature brings about his own downfall. Fable 100 is similar to the earlier fable where an eagle is killed with an arrow made with eagle feathers; the tree's own wood is used against it.



# Fables 101-105

## Fables 101-105 Summary

(101) "The Silver Fir Tree and the Bramble" A silver fir tree says he is better than the bramble because he provides wood and decks for ships. The bramble reminds the tree that a bramble never has to worry about an ax. (102) "The Stag at the Spring and the Lion" A stag admires the reflection of his antlers in the water but hates his spindly legs. A lion starts to chase him, and the stag initially outdistances the lion. His antlers get caught in some branches, though. He realizes that his legs, which he had criticized, helped him while his antlers caused his downfall. (103) "The Hind and the Vine" A hind hides from huntsmen in some overgrown vines. Feeling safe, she nibbles on the vines. The huntsmen hear the leaves and find her. She realizes that she shouldn't have damaged the vines that were protecting her. (104) "The Hind and the Lion in a Cave" A hind hides from hunters in a cave only to find a lion. As the lion kills it, the hind realizes that he has gone from a bad situation to a worse one. (105) "The Hind Afflicted by Deformity" A hind turns her good eye to land and her blind eye to the less dangerous sea. Poaching sailors catch her and kill her. As she dies, she realizes that danger was in the place she least expected it.

## Fables 101-105 Analysis

In fable 101, a tree learns that his bragging means nothing when it comes to his death; his positive attributes are also his downfall. A stag learns not to put his faith in the wrong things in fable 102. What seems beautiful is not as important as what is functional. Fable 103 shows that one should not damage the things that keep one safe. Fable 104 is an example of "out of the frying pan and into the fire." In fable 105, the hind learns that one can never know where danger lies.



## Fables 106-110

### Fables 106-110 Summary

(106) "The Kid on the Roof of the House and the Wolf" A kid wanders onto the roof of a house and sees a wolf. Feeling safe, she shouts insults to the wolf. The wolf says that it is the roof that mocks him, not the kid. (107) "The Kid and the Wolf Who Played the Flute" A kid, pursued by a wolf, asks the wolf to play the flute so that he can die with dignity. The wolf plays. Hounds hear the flute and chase the wolf. The wolf realizes that he is a butcher, not a piper. (108) "Hermes and the Sculptor" Hermes, wanting to see how much men esteem him, disguises himself as a mortal and visits a sculptor's workshop. The sculptor says that the statue of Hermes is free if he buys the statues of Zeus and Hera. (109) "Hermes and the Earth" Zeus creates the first man and woman and tells Hermes to show them where to dig to grow food. (110) "Hermes and Teiresias" Hermes wants to test the prophetic powers of the blind sage, Teiresias of Thebes. He disguises himself as a mortal and steals Teiresias's cattle. He tells Teiresias the cattle are gone and only the birds can say where they are. Teiresias, after listening to the birds, says that only Hermes can say where the cattle are.

### Fables 106-110 Analysis

In fable 106, the wolf points out that the kid has courage only because of his safe position on the roof. A wolf loses his meal by trying to do something against his nature in fable 107. In fable 108, a god learns bad things about himself through his own trickery. Hermes also learns that a true prophet cannot be tricked in fable 110.



# Fables 111-115

## Fables 111-115 Summary

(111) "Hermes and the Artisans" Zeus charges Hermes to pour the poison of lies over all the artisans. Hermes makes enough for everyone and pours it over them. When he gets to the cobbler, he finds he has plenty of poison left. Hermes pours all of the poison on the cobbler, making all of them liars. (112) "The Chariot of Hermes and the Arabs" Hermes drives across the sky carrying lies, villainy and fraud in his chariot. He distributes a small amount to each country he visits. He breaks down in the Arabs' country, and they steal his cargo. He calls all Arabs cheats and liars. (113) "The Eunuch and the Sacrificer" A eunuch begs a sacrificer to help him become a father. The sacrificer says there is a discrepancy between the offering and the eunuch. (114) "The Two Enemies" Two enemies sail. One takes the prow, and the other takes the stern. A storm blows up. The man at the stern asks his enemy which of them will go down first. The man at the prow says that the prow will go down first. The man at the stern is happy to know that his enemy will die first. (115) "The Adder and the Fox" An adder floats along the river on a clump of thorn shrubs. A passing fox shouts out to him, "The worth of a vessel is its master!"

## Fables 111-115 Analysis

Fable 111 is an ancient joke that calls all cobblers liars. Fable 112 is an ancient racist joke calling all Arabs cheats and liars. Fable 113 is another joke about the eunuch's impossible wish. In fable 114, the man is more concerned that his enemy will die first than that he will also die. Fable 115 points out that the clump of shrubs is only meaningful because of the adder floating in it.



# Fables 116-120

## Fables 116-120 Summary

(116) "The Adder and the File" An adder asks for alms from the tools in a workshop. He begs from the file. The file says that his nature is to take away, not to give. (117) "The Adder and the Water-snake" An adder and a water snake fight over a spring. The frogs hate the water snake and offer to help the adder. The frogs croak encouragement during the battle. The adder wins and tells the frogs that their words were useless. (118) "Zeus and Shame" Zeus introduces shame to humans through their rectums. Shame says that she will only go in that way if nothing else does. (119) "Zeus and the Fox" Zeus makes the fox king of all animals. He tests the fox during a royal procession by releasing a beetle in the fox's carriage. The fox ignores propriety and chases the beetle. Zeus returns the fox to his previous position. (120) "Zeus and the Men" Zeus creates men and tells Hermes to give them intelligence. Hermes covers men with intelligence. Intelligence covers the short men but only partially covers the taller ones.

## Fables 116-120 Analysis

Fable 116 emphasizes that people only do what their natures allow. In fable 117, an adder points out that words are useless when actions are required. Fable 118 is a joke saying that homosexuals have no shame. Fable 119 is another fable showing that the nature of a creature cannot be changed. Fable 120 is a joke on tall people, calling them unintelligent.



# Fables 121-125

## Fables 121-125 Summary

(121) "Zeus and Apollo" Zeus and Apollo compete at archery. Apollo shoots, and Zeus covers the same distance in a single step. (122) "Zeus and the Snake" Zeus weds, and all of the animals bring him gifts according to their means. A snake slithers to Zeus with a rose in its mouth. Zeus refuses to accept anything from the mouth of a snake. (123) "Zeus and the Jar of Good Things" Zeus shuts up all good things in a wine jar. He gives the jar to a man. The man is curious and opens the jar. All of the good things fly out and up to the gods. (124) "Zeus, Prometheus, Athena, and Momos" Zeus makes a bull, while Prometheus makes a man, and Athena makes a house. They ask Momos to judge their work. Momos, jealous of their creations, criticizes everyone's work. Zeus angrily banishes Momos from Olympus. (125) "Zeus and the Tortoise" Zeus entertains the animals at his wedding feast. He notices the tortoise's absence. He finds her the next day and questions her absence. She says she didn't want to leave her home. Zeus curses her to carry her home on her back.

## Fables 121-125 Analysis

In fable 121, Zeus shows that none can best him in competition. Fable 122 judges the gift by the giver. Fable 123 shows that good things come down to man at the discretion of the gods. In fable 124, jealousy is Momos's downfall. Fable 125 is a nature myth explaining the tortoise's shell.



## Fables 126-130

### Fables 126-130 Summary

(126) "Zeus the Judge" Zeus tells Hermes to inscribe tablets with the faults of men and deposit the tablets in box. This way, he can judge the faults equally. Zeus mixes up the tablets and judges some faults sooner than others. (127) "The Sun and the Frogs" The animals rejoice about the Sun's marriage. The animals rejoice, but a frog tells them they are fools. The Sun dries out the marshlands as it is. The frog says that if he takes a wife and they have a child, there will be nothing left. (128) "The Mule" A fat mule tells herself that her father was a fast horse and that she is like him. She runs a race and remembers her father was an ass. (129) "Herakles and Athena" Herakles sees something that looks like an apple and steps on it. It grows each time he tries to destroy it. Athena tells him that the thing has a spirit of dispute. The more he fights it, the bigger it will get. (130) "Herakles and Pluto" Herakles is admitted to Olympus and bows to each god. When he sees Pluto, he does not bow and turns his back to him. Herakles says that when he was on earth, Pluto was always attracted to wicked men.

### Fables 126-130 Analysis

Fable 126 explains why some people pay for their faults sooner than others. In fable 128, a mule learns that nothing can be gained from lying about one's history. In fable 129, Herakles learns that violence only makes things worse.





# Fables 131-135

## Fables 131-135 Summary

(131) "The Demi-god" A man keeps a statue of a demi-god and showers it with offerings and sacrifices. The god appears to him and tells him to stop squandering his wealth because the man will blame the god if he becomes poor. (132) "The Tunny-fish and the Dolphin" A tunny-fish tries to escape a dolphin. He leaps and lands on a sandbar. The dolphin leaps after him. As they both lie gasping for breath, the tunny-fish says he is no longer afraid of death since the one who caused it is also dying. (133) "The Quack Doctor" A man consults many doctors, all of whom tell him he will recover slowly. A quack tells him that he should settle his affairs. The man gets better and tells the doctor that he swore to Hades that the doctor was a quack and should not be put to death for his diagnoses. (134) "The Doctor and the Sick Man" A doctor's patient dies. The doctor says the man died of drinking too much. The man's servant says the doctor should have said something when the man was still alive. (135) "The Kite and the Snake" A kite picks up a snake, and the snake bites him. The kite falls and dies. The snake says he did nothing to cause the kite to carry him off, so the kite deserves to die.

## Fables 131-135 Analysis

Fable 131 shows that men will blame the gods for all of their problems, even if it is the man's own doing. Fable 132 is similar to the fable of the two enemies on the boat. It shows that revenge is sweeter than life. A doctor gives his diagnoses too late in fable 134.



## Fables 136-140

### Fables 136-140 Summary

(136) "The Kite Who Neighed" A kite, whose voice was high-pitched and shrill, hears a horse neighing beautifully. Envious, the kite tries to imitate the horse with all his might and loses his voice. Now he has neither his nor the horse's voice. (137) "The Bird-catcher and the Asp" A bird-catcher builds a snare for a bird. He sets the trap down on top of an asp without seeing it. The asp bites him, and as he lies dying, the bird-catcher realizes that as he set a trap to kill others, he has become Death's prey. (138) "The Old Horse" An old horse is forced to work a millstone and says that he has been reduced from turning a racetrack to turning a millstone. (139) "The Horse, the Ox, the Dog, and the Man" Zeus gives man a short life span. Man offers shelter to a horse, a dog and an ox in exchange for a portion of their life spans. When men reach the years of the horse, they are glorious and proud. When they reach the years of the ox, they easily accept discipline. When they reach the dog years, they are irritable and grumpy. (140) "The Horse and the Groom" A groom steals his horse's barley and sells it. To make up for the theft, the groom is extra attentive to the horse. The horse tells the groom to bring back the barley if he really wants to see the horse look good.

### Fables 136-140 Analysis

Fable 136 shows the danger of trying to hard to be something that one is not. Fable 137 emphasizes the irony of the bird-catcher's death. Fable 138 tells the plight of an old racehorse. An explanation for man's changing attitudes as he ages is given in fable 139.



# Fables 141-145

## Fables 141-145 Summary

(141) "The Horse and the Ass" The ass asks the horse to carry a little of his load. The horse refuses, and the ass dies of exhaustion. The owner puts the ass's load on the horse and then loads the ass's carcass on the horse as well. The horse realizes that by turning down a little extra weight, he now has to carry everything. (142) "The Horse and the Soldier" A man treats his horse well during times of war. When the war ends, the man puts the horse to work and feeds him only hay. Another war breaks out, and the horse tells the man that he is no longer a warhorse. Now he is an ass. (143) "The Reed and the Olive" A reed and an olive tree argue about who is most steadfast and strong. The olive tree says the reed is weak and pliant, while he is strong and sturdy. A strong wind blows, and the reed bends and shakes but survives. The olive tree, resisting the wind, snaps from the force. (144) "The Camel Who Shat in the River" A camel crosses a swiftly flowing river. He defecates and sees his feces rush past him. He says that what was behind him is now in front of him. (145) "The Camel, the Elephant and the Ape" Both the camel and the elephant want to be king. The ape says that the camel is not a good choice because he never shows anger to wrongdoers. The elephant is not a good choice because he is afraid of piglets and couldn't protect his subjects from them.

## Fables 141-145 Analysis

In fable 141, a horse learns the hard way that a little extra work may save many future troubles. The horse in fable 142 makes a joke about the man's ingratitude. Fable 143 shows how important it is to be flexible and resilient.



## Fables 146-150

### Fables 146-150 Summary

(146) "The Camel and Zeus" A camel envies a bull his horns. The camel goes to Zeus and asks for horns. Zeus, angry at the camel's ingratitude, refuses to give him horns and cuts off a portion of his ears. (147) "The Dancing Camel" A camel is forced to dance by his master. He says that he is not graceful when he dances or when he walks. (148) "The Camel Seen for the First Time" Men see a camel and, awed by his huge size, run away in fear. Realizing the camel is gentle, they pluck up their courage and approach it. Realizing the camel has no temper, they hold it in contempt and put a bridle on it. They give it to children to lead. (149) "The Two Scarab Beetles" One beetle travels to the mainland promising to bring food for the other. He finds plenty to feed on and returns at the end of winter. The other beetle asks about the food. The traveler says there was plenty to live on in the mainland but not enough to bring back. (150) "The Crab and the Fox" A crab decides to leave the sea for land. A fox finds him and begins to eat him. The crab realizes that he should have stayed in the sea.

### Fables 146-150 Analysis

Fable 146 relates that ingratitude will always be punished. Fable 148 shows how easily fear can be turned into contempt. Fables 149 and 150 show animals leaving their habitats. One promises to bring back food, but breaks his promise. The other finds only death by leaving his home.



# Fables 151-155

## Fables 151-155 Summary

(151) "The Crab and Her Mother" A mother crab tells her child not to walk sideways or drag her sides against wet rocks. The crab says that she learns to walk from watching her mother. (152) "The Walnut Tree" A walnut tree is upset about being hit by stones. He says that he is unlucky to attract so many insults year after year. (153) "The Beaver" Ancients believe the beaver's genitals possess cures to certain ailments. A hunted beaver will run for a certain distance. If he sees that he will be caught, he will bite off his privates and throw them at his pursuer to save his own life. (154) "The Gardener Watering the Vegetables" According to the gardener, wild vegetable flourish while cultivated ones are sickly because the earth acts as mother to one and stepmother to the other. (155) "The Gardener and the Dog" A gardener's dog falls down a well. The gardener climbs in the well to save it. The dog, afraid of being pushed further down the well, bites his owner. The man gives up, saying the dog must want to die if he would bite the person trying to save him.

## Fables 151-155 Analysis

Fable 151 shows that children learn from their parents' actions, not their words. In fable 153, the beaver will do anything to save its life. A gardener explains that nature decides what lives and what dies in fable 154. The gardener learns that some beasts will strike out at those who try to help them in fable 155.



# Fables 156-160

## Fables 156-160 Summary

(156) "The Kithara-player" An untalented kithara-player sings from morning to night. Hearing his voice echo off his thickly plastered walls, the player assumes that he has a beautiful voice. He performs in a theater and is driven off stage by people throwing stones. (157) "The Thrush" A thrush pecks berries in a myrtle grove. A fowler sees her and catches her in a lime-trap. The thrush says that by enjoying the pleasure of food, she has deprived herself of life. (158) "The Thieves and the Cock" Some thieves break into a house and steal a cockerel. To keep the thieves from killing him, the cock says that he is useful to men because he will rouse them in the night for their work. The thieves say that by waking everyone, it makes their job difficult. (159) "The Stomach and the Feet" The stomach and feet argue over who is stronger. The feet say they are stronger because they must carry the stomach. The stomach says that if she doesn't provide nourishment, the feet won't be able to carry her. (160) "The Jackdaw and the Fox" A hungry jackdaw sits for ages in a fig tree waiting for the figs to ripen. A fox comes along and tells the jackdaw to stop living on hope.

## Fables 156-160 Analysis

In fable 156, a kithara player learns that talent is decided by his audience not his ego. In fable 159, the feet and the stomach must accept that they each depend on the other. The fox in fable 160 makes the point that action is more important than hope.



# Fables 161-165

## Fables 161-165 Summary

(161) "The Jackdaw and the Ravens" A jackdaw disdains the company of other jackdaws and tries to befriend the ravens. The ravens do not recognize the jackdaw's voice, so they chase him off. The other jackdaws are angry at his defection, so the jackdaw is left alone. (162) "The Jackdaw and the Birds" Zeus decides he will make the most beautiful bird the king of all birds. The birds wash themselves, and a jackdaw gathers up their dropped feathers. Zeus votes for the jackdaw, and the birds take back their feathers. (163) "The Jackdaw and the Pigeons" A jackdaw whitens himself so he can share food with some wild pigeons. He eats and then lets out a cry. The pigeons don't recognize his voice and chase him away. Since he whitened himself, the jackdaws chase him away as well. He is left with no food from either group. (164) "The Jackdaw Who Escaped" A man catches a jackdaw, ties a string around it and gives it to his child. The jackdaw escapes and flies into a tree. The string gets caught on a branch, and the jackdaw realizes that he will now starve to death because he couldn't bear slavery. (165) "The Raven and the Fox" A raven eats a piece of meat in a tree. A fox comes along and compliments the raven's looks. The raven wants to prove he can sing as well, so he drops the meat in order to crow. The fox eats the meat and tells the raven to use better judgment.

## Fables 161-165 Analysis

Fables 161, 162 and 163 show the downfall of a jackdaw trying to be something he isn't. The jackdaw realizes that captivity is better than death in fable 164. A raven loses his meal because of his conceited ego in fable 165.



## Fables 166-170

### Fables 166-170 Summary

(166) "The Raven and Hermes" A raven is caught in a snare. He tells Apollo that he will give him frankincense if Apollo will rescue him. Apollo agrees, but the raven does not fulfill his promise. The raven gets caught again and prays to Hermes for help. Hermes says the raven cheated his first master, so he cannot be trusted. (167) "The Raven and the Snake" A hungry raven picks up a snake to eat it. The snake bites him, and the raven says his windfall has murdered him. (168) "A Sick Raven" A sick raven tells her mother to pray to the gods for her health. Her mother tells her that she has stolen from them all and that the gods will not take pity on her. (169) "The Crested Lark" A crested lark, trapped by a snare, says that she is very unlucky because she has never stolen anything precious. She steals a small piece of grain and gets the death penalty. (170) "The Chough and the Raven" A chough, envious of the raven's ability to give men omens, sits in a tree and waits for some travelers. When they pass, he lets out many loud calls. The men ignore him because only ravens give omens.

### Fables 166-170 Analysis

A raven learns that dishonesty and greed is his downfall in fables 166, 167 and 168. A crested lark learns that even a small theft can cause one's downfall in fable 169. In fable 170, a chough learns that he will never be a raven.





# Fables 171-175

## Fables 171-175 Summary

(171) "The Chough and the Dog" A chough wants to offer a sacrifice to Athena. The dog tells her that Athena hates choughs. The chough says it is all the more reason to offer her a sacrifice. (172) "The Snails" A child bakes some snails, and they start to sputter. He calls them stupid for singing while their houses are on fire. (173) "The Swan Mistaken for a Goose" A wealthy man keeps a swan and a goose together. One night, the man goes to get the goose so that he may cook it. Unable to tell the two birds apart, he picks up the swan. The swan begins to sing. The man recognizes the swan's voice and does not eat him. (174) "The Swan and His Owner" A man buys a swan and asks it to sing at dinner. The swan sits silent. The swan realizes he is about to die and begins to sing. The man says he should have prepared to sacrifice the swan to get him to sing sooner. (175) "The Two Dogs" A man teaches one of his dogs to hunt and the other to guard the home. He splits the food evenly between the two dogs. The guard dog tells the hunting dog not to be angry with him. It is his master who taught him to live off the work of others.

## Fables 171-175 Analysis

Fable 171 plays on the need for sacrifice to those who dislike you. In fable 172, a child makes a joke about the cooking snails. Fables 173 and 174 are about the swan's song; the beautiful song the swan sings before its death is its salvation in both stories. Fable 175 condemns the master of the dogs for living off of others' work.



## Fables 176-180

### Fables 176-180 Summary

(176) "The Starving Dogs" A group of starving dogs finds some animal hides in the river. Since they cannot reach them, they agree to drink all of the water in the river so that they can reach the skin. The dogs burst from the water before they can consume it all. (177) "The Man Bitten by a Dog" A man looks for someone to heal the wounds inflicted on him by a dog. Someone tells him to wipe the blood from his wound with a piece of bread and throw the bread to the dog that attacked him. The man says if he does that, every dog in the city will try to bite him. (178) "The Dog Entertained as a Guest (or The Man and His Dog)" A man prepares dinner for a friend. His dog invites another to dinner. The guest dog sees the food and starts wagging his tail. The cook throws him out the window, and he heads home howling. (179) "The Hunting Hound and the Dogs" A dog, raised to fight wild beasts, breaks loose and runs away. He tells other dogs that though he is well fed, he risks his life by hunting bears, lions and other wild beasts. The other dogs believe they have a good life even though they are poor. (180) "The Dog, the Cock, and the Fox" A dog and a cock are friends. The cock flies into a tree, and the dog lies down underneath it. A fox comes along and tries to get the cock to come down. The cock tells the fox to wake up his doorkeeper at the foot of the tree. The dog tears the fox to pieces.

### Fables 176-180 Analysis

These fables are mainly jokes. In 176, the dogs die from full stomachs while they are trying to get food from the river. Fable 177 shows that if one rewards bad behavior they will attract other evils. Fable 178 plays on the contrast between a dog's station and a man's station. In fable 179 another aspect of a dog's life is the focus. To be well fed, the dog must risk his life. The dog in fable 180 acts as a guard for the clever cock who tricks the fox.



## Fables 181-185

### Fables 181-185 Summary

(181) "The Dog and the Shellfish" A dog, loving to swallow eggs, finds a shellfish and eats it because he thinks it is an egg. The fish makes him sick, and he says that it is his own fault for thinking anything round is an egg. (182) "The Dog and the Hare" A hound seizes a hare and tries to bite it and lick its chops at the same time. The hare tells the hound to either bite him or kiss him so that he can know whether the dog is a friend or an enemy. (183) "The Dog and the Butcher" A dog bounds into a butcher's shop and takes a heart while the butcher's back is turned. The butcher turns around and says that the dog has not taken a heart, but given him heart to be on the watch for him. (184) "The Sleeping Dog and the Wolf" A wolf pounces on a sleeping dog. The dog says the wolf should let him fatten up and come back later to eat him. The wolf agrees. He comes back to find the dog on the roof and reminds him of their bargain. The dog says that if the wolf ever sees him asleep on the ground again, he shouldn't wait to eat him. (185) "The Dog Who Carried the Meat" A dog crosses the river holding a piece of meat. He looks at his reflection in the water and believes he sees a dog holding a bigger piece of meat. He drops his piece and jumps into the water to steal the other. He is left with neither.

### Fables 181-185 Analysis

Fable 181 is a joke about assuming things based on appearances. Fable 182 is also a joke, playing on the dog's bite and "kiss." The butcher in fable 183 makes a pun on the word "heart." In fable 184, the wolf learns a lesson about letting go of something he has in hopes of something better. This is similar to other fables in the collection, where the captor refuses to let the captured prey go in hopes of gaining something better. The dog learns this lesson again in fable 185.



# Fables 186-190

## Fables 186-190 Summary

(186) "The Dog with a Bell" His dog being a biter, a man ties a bell around the dog's neck to warn people of the dog's approach. The dog proudly shakes and wags his bell around until another dog tells him the bell is to warn people of his ill nature. (187) "The Dog Who Chased a Lion, and the Fox" A dog spots a lion and gives chase. The lion turns and roars, causing the frightened dog to run away. A fox sees this and says the dog tried to chase a lion but couldn't endure his roar. (188) "The Gnat and the Lion" A gnat says that he is stronger than a lion. He flies up a lion's nose, and the lion tears at his face trying to kill it. The gnat flies off and lands in a spider web. He realizes that he might have beat a lion, but he is caught by a small spider. (189) "The Gnat and the Bull" A gnat settles on a bull's horn and sits. As he is about to fly away, he asks the bull if he has been bothered. The bull didn't feel him when he landed, and he won't feel him when he leaves. (190) "The Hares and the Foxes" The hares, at war with the eagles, call to the foxes for aid. The foxes say they would help if they didn't know whom the hares were at war with.

## Fables 186-190 Analysis

The dog with the bell in fable 186 doesn't realize he should be ashamed until someone tells him. In fable 187, a dog is bested by a lion's roar. The gnat learns that even though he can best the king of beasts, there are still creatures that can best him in fable 188. The gnat learns how insignificant he is to an animal as large as a bull in fable 189.



# Fables 191-195

## Fables 191-195 Summary

(191) "The Hares and the Frogs" The hares, tired of being prey to so many animals, decide to all kill themselves at once. They run with the intention of drowning themselves in a pond. All of the frogs, having heard the hares approach, leap into the water. At this, one hare stops and tells the others that there are animals more afraid than they are.

(192) "The Hare and the Fox" A hare wishes to get into a fox's good graces. He asks the fox why foxes are considered wily. The fox tells the hare to come to his home, and he will entertain him and show him how he passes an evening. The hare follows him home and realizes his fate too late. (193) "The Seagull and the Kite" A gull ruptures his gullet swallowing a fish and lies dying. A kite comes along and says that the seagull is a bird that looked for his living in the sea. (194) "The Lioness and the Vixen" A vixen criticizes a lioness for only having one child. The lion says that, yes, it is only one child, but it is a lion. (195) "The Royalty of the Lion" A lion, gentle and just in his rule, summons all of the animals together. He wants them to each have a say in binding all of the animals together in peace. A hare praises the day because now there will be justice for the weak.

## Fables 191-195 Analysis

The hares learn that no matter how afraid they are, there are creatures more fearful in fable 191. Fable 192 is one of a number of fables where the wily fox tricks its prey. Fable 194 shows that it is the quality of a person not the number of people that is important.



# Fables 196-200

## Fables 196-200 Summary

(196) "The Aging Lion and the Fox" A lion is too old to hunt, so he lies down in a cave and pretends to be sick. When the other animals come to visit, he eats them. A fox stands outside the cave and asks the lion how he is. The lion tells him to come inside and see. The fox says there are a lot of footprints going in but none coming out. (197) "The Shut-in Lion and the Ploughman" A lion enters a ploughman's shed. The ploughman closes the door to catch him. The lion begins killing his cattle, and the ploughman lets him lose. He realizes it is foolish to cage a creature that is scary from a distance. (198) "The Amorous Lion and the Ploughman" A lion falls in love with at ploughman's daughter and asks for her hand in marriage. The ploughman is afraid of the lion. The lion agrees to remove his teeth and claws in order to marry the ploughman's daughter. Once the lion is no longer dangerous, the man chases him away. (199) "The Lion, the Fox, and the Stag" A sick lion calls his friend the fox and tells him to bring a stag to the cave. The lion wants to eat the stag's entrails and heart to cure his illness. The fox tricks the stag into the cave twice before he is successful. The fox eats the stag's heart and tells the lion that the stag didn't have one. (200) "The Lion, the Bear and the Fox" A lion and a bear fight over a dead swan and wound each other. As they are dying, a fox steals the swan.

## Fables 196-200 Analysis

The fox shows his wily intelligence when he outsmarts the lion in fable 196, and another fox tricks a lion and a stag in fable 199. In fable 197, the lion's ferocity is his salvation. A lion loses his bargaining power when he gives in to a ploughman's demands in fable 198 and loses his ferocity. In fable 200, the lion and the bear both lose what they want through fighting with each other.



# Fables 201-205

## Fables 201-205 Summary

(201) "The Lion and the Frog" A lion hears a loud croak from a frog and roars back. He is surprised to find such a loud noise from so small an animal. (202) "The Lion and the Dolphin" A lion and a dolphin become allies. The lion wars with a bull and calls to the dolphin for help. The dolphin says to blame Mother Nature for not making him a land creature. (203) "The Lion and the Wild Boar" A lion and a boar fight over who can drink from a spring first. They see vultures waiting to eat the loser and put aside their differences. (204) "The Lion and the Hare" A lion sees a sleeping hare and is about to eat it when he sees a deer. He chases the deer but he loses it. He goes back to find the hare has left. (205) "The Lion, the Wolf and the Fox" A lion is sick and receives the respects of the other animals. The fox does not come, and the wolf, wanting to make trouble, says the fox is disrespectful of the lion. The fox enters and says he has found a cure for the lion's illness. He must skin the wolf alive and wear his skin while it is still warm.

## Fables 201-205 Analysis

The prideful lion in fable 201 is surprised that a frog can compete with his roar. Fable 202 focuses on the fact that animals can only act according to their natures. In fable 203, a contrast to fable 200 where the lion and the bear both lose their prey because they are fighting, the lion and the boar realize the folly of fighting. A lion loses his prey because he went after a bigger animal in fable 204. This fable reiterates the theme of holding on to what one has and not letting go in favor of something better. Fable 205 shows the wily fox outwitting the mean-spirited wolf.



# Fables 206-210

## Fables 206-210 Summary

(206) "The Lion and the Mouse Who Returned a Kindness" A mouse begs a lion not to kill him, saying he will save the lion's life in return. The lion is amused and lets the mouse go. The lion gets caught in a net, and the mouse chews through it to free him from hunters. (207) "The Lion and the Wild Ass" A lion and a wild ass hunt together and divide their food. The lion divides it into three portions and takes two of them, one for being king and one for being stronger than the ass. (208) "The Lion and the Ass Hunting Together" A lion and an ass find a cave full of wild goats. The ass runs in and makes a lot of noise. The goats run out, and the lion kills them. The lion says he would have been afraid, too, if he didn't know the noisemaker was an ass. (209) "The Lion, the Ass and the Fox" A lion, an ass and a fox hunt together and catch plenty of game. The ass tries to divide the game into three equal portions, and the lion kills him. The fox divides the game into a very small pile and a very large pile. He gives the large pile to the lion to avoid being killed. (210) "The Lion, Prometheus, and the Elephant" A lion complains to Prometheus that even though he is strong, he is still afraid of roosters. He sees an elephant afraid of a gnat and changes his mind because a rooster is bigger than a gnat.

## Fables 206-210 Analysis

A lion learns that even the smallest creatures can save the lives of those much stronger in fable 206. The fable shows that appearances aren't as important as actions. In fables 207, 208 and 209, a lion hunts with an ass. In the first, the lion exerts his power over the ass, and in the second, the lion admits that the ass's noise is frightening. Fable 209 is very similar to fable 207, but the fox and the ass divide the food instead of the lion.





# Fables 211-215

## Fables 211-215 Summary

(211) "The Lion and the Bull" A lion tells a bull to come to dinner. The bull goes and sees cauldrons and spits but no sheep. He realizes the lion wants to eat beef for dinner. (212) "The Raging Lion and the Stag" A stag sees an enraged lion. He wonders what he will do when he is enraged since he is already scary when he is calm. (213) "The Lion Who was Afraid of a Mouse, and the Fox" A mouse runs over the body of a sleeping lion and wakes him. The lion rolls around trying to see what was attacking him. A fox criticizes the lion for being afraid of a mouse. The lion says he is simply surprised that an animal would walk on a sleeping lion. (214) "The Bandit and the Mulberry Tree." A bandit murders someone and runs away. He tells the people he meets that his hands are stained from the mulberry tree. The bandit is caught and hung from a mulberry tree. The mulberry tree has no pity for the man who blamed the tree for his crimes. (215) "The Wolves and the Dogs at War" The dogs and the wolves are at war. The general tells them that the wolves have the advantage because they are all of the same breed, size and color. The dogs are all different breeds from different countries. The general says they cannot win without unity and harmony among them.

## Fables 211-215 Analysis

Fable 211 continues the tales of the lion. This lion tricks a bull into visiting him to be his meal. In fable 212, the nature of the lion is amplified by his rage. The wily fox mocks the proud lion in fable 213. Fable 214 shows a man being punished for his crime and his unwillingness to admit to it. He has stained hands and blames the tree for them. Justice is served when he is hanged from the same tree he tried to blame. Fable 215 states the message that unity is necessary in times of war.

# Fables 216-220

## Fables 216-220 Summary

(216) "The Dogs Reconciled with the Wolves" The wolves tell the dogs that if they will let the wolves eat their sheep, the wolves will share the game with the dogs. The dogs agree. The wolves, once inside the flock, tear the dogs apart. (217) "The Wolves and the Sheep" The wolves cannot eat sheep because of the sheep dogs. They tell the sheep to send the dogs away so that they can be friends. The sheep do, and the wolves slaughter the sheep. (218) "The Wolves, the Sheep and the Ram" The wolves offer to make peace with the sheep if the sheep will put their dogs to death. The sheep agree, but an old ram says he could barely graze in peace with the dogs there to protect him. (219) "The Wolf Proud of His Shadow, and the Lion" A wolf sees his elongated shadow and thinks he should not fear a lion. A lion pounces on him and kills him. (220) "The Wolf and the Goat" A wolf sees a goat grazing above a sheer cliff. He tells her to come down because it is not safe and there is better food where he is. The goat says that only the wolf will get food if he comes down.

## Fables 216-220 Analysis

Fables 216, 217 and 218 portray the wolves as devious killers who will connive to get their prey. These fables show how easily an evil being can take advantage of those without intellect. In fable 219, a wolf loses his life because of his own arrogance. In fable 220, the wily wolf fails to trick a wise goat.



# Fables 221-225

## Fables 221-225 Summary

(221) "The Wolf and the Lamb" A wolf wants to eat the lamb, so he accuses him of many different injustices. When the accusations don't work, wolf eats the lamb anyway. (222) "The Wolf and the Young Lamb Taking Refuge in a Temple" A lamb, pursued by a wolf, takes refuge in a temple. The wolf yells that the lamb risks sacrifice in the temple. The lamb would rather die for a god than for a wolf. (223) "The Wolf and the Old Woman" A wolf hears a woman tell her child to stop crying or she will let the wolf eat him. The wolf waits and later hears the woman telling the child that she will kill any wolf that comes. The wolf says the family says one thing and does another. (224) "The Wolf and the Heron" A wolf with a bone stuck in his throat meets a heron. The heron agrees to pull the bone out by sticking his neck down the wolf's throat. He does and demands payment. The wolf says that the heron stuck his head down the throat of a wolf and is still alive; that is payment enough. (225) "The Wolf and the Horse" A wolf tells a horse where to find barley. The wolf says that since he can't eat barley, he wants to hear the horse eat it. The horse says the wolf only hears his stomach.

## Fables 221-225 Analysis

In fable 221, one sees that an evil person cannot be deterred from their purpose by logic and honesty. Fable 222 shows a lamb choosing death for a good cause instead of to appease evil. In fable 224, a heron learns that it is better to escape with one's life than to receive payment. Fable 225 is another example of a wolf trying to lure away its prey.



# Fables 226-230

## Fables 226-230 Summary

(226) "The Wolf and the Dog" A wolf sees a large dog in a wooden collar. The dog blames a hunter. The wolf realizes he is more afraid of the collar than starvation. (227) "The Wolf and the Lion" A wolf steals a lamb and comes across a lion. He drops the lamb, and the lion picks it up. The wolf accuses the lion of stealing, and the lion asks if the wolf got the lamb honestly. (228) "The Wolf and the Ass" A wolf proposes a law that all wolves share their food in order to prevent any one from going hungry. An ass comes forward and says that the wolf hid food at his lair the evening before. The wolf changes his mind. (229) "The Wolf and the Shepherd" A shepherd sees a wolf, but the wolf makes no move to harm him or his sheep. The shepherd assumes the wolf is a friend and leaves him to watch the sheep. The wolf kills several, and the shepherd realizes his mistake. (230) "The Satisfied Wolf and the Ewe" A full wolf sees an ewe stuck on her back. The ewe, having never met a wolf, wishes all wolves were blind. The wolf, full from eating anyway, lets her go for being honest.

## Fables 226-230 Analysis

Fable 226 shows that it is better to be poor and live free than to be pampered in captivity. Fable 227 shows the hypocritical nature of the wolf. He stole the lamb, and then when he dropped it, he accused a lion of being a thief. In fable 228, another hypocritical wolf hides his own food and then proposes that others share. Fable 229 shows yet another wily wolf playing tricks to get its prey, while fable 230 is unusual in that the wolf lets the ewe go free.



## Fables 231-235

### Fables 231-235 Summary

(231) "The Injured Wolf and the Ewe" An injured wolf begs an ewe to bring him some water. The ewe refuses, saying that once the wolf drinks, he will want to eat. (232) "The Lamp" A lamp boasts of being brighter than the sun. A gust of wind blows it out, and someone else tells it to light up because the sun isn't blown out by wind. (233) "The Diviner" Someone robs a diviner's house. As the diviner runs home, someone asks why the diviner didn't see it beforehand. (234) "The Bees and Zeus" The bees are tired of supplying honey and ask for the power to kill with their stings. Zeus grants the ability, but the bees will lose their stinger and die each time they sting. (235) "The Beekeeper" A man steals honeycombs from a beekeeper's house. The beekeeper comes home, and the bees sting him. He yells at the bees for stinging the person who takes care of them.

### Fables 231-235 Analysis

In fable 231, the injured wolf suffers for his wily nature, since the ewe refuses to help him. This is the last of the wolf fables. Fable 232 is a vanity fable about a lamp boasting that he is as good as the sun. Fable 233 is an ironic tale of a diviner who could not foresee his house being robbed. Fable 234 is a nature myth showing that there is always a trade off for power. Zeus gives the bees the ability to sting their enemies, but the bees will die as a result.



## Fables 236-240

### Fables 236-240 Summary

(236) "The Begging Priests of Cybele" A donkey, belonging to priests, drops dead from exhaustion. The priests use the donkey's skin to make drums. They say that though the donkey is dead, he still gets hit. (237) "The Mice and the House-ferrets" Mice and house-ferrets are at war. The mouse generals wear horns to distinguish themselves from mouse soldiers. The mice lose and run back to their holes. The generals can't get into their holes because of the horns. (238) "The Fly" A fly falls into a pot of boiled meat. She welcomes death because she has eaten and drank and had a bath. (239) "The Flies" Some flies find honey and eat it. They stick to the honey and suffocate. They realize that a moment's pleasure caused their death. (240) "The Ant" The ant was once a farmer. One day the farmer steals his neighbor's harvest, and Zeus, angered by his greed, turns him into an ant. Though the ant is a different shape, it has the same character. He travels far and wide stealing other people's food and storing it up for himself.

### Fables 236-240 Analysis

Fable 236 is a joke on the sad life of the donkey. The mice generals in fable 237 lose their lives because of their pride. A fly shows that it is best to die when all of one's needs have been fulfilled in fable 238. Fable 239, another fly story, tells a similar tale of simultaneous death and gratification. Fable 240 is one of many that emphasize that one's nature never changes.



# Fables 241-245

## Fables 241-245 Summary

(241) "The Ant and the Scarab Beetle" An ant gathers and stores food while a scarab beetle rests. Winter comes, and the beetle asks for food. The ant says that the beetle should have worked instead of resting. (242) "The Ant and the Pigeon" An ant, caught by the flow of the river, is about to drown. A pigeon sees the dilemma and tosses the ant a twig on which to float. The ant sees a fowler laying pigeon traps and bites him to save the pigeon. (243) "The Field Mouse and the Town Mouse" The town mouse invites the field mouse to visit. He shows the field mouse a kitchen full of wonderful food. Each time they are about to eat, someone enters the kitchen, and they have to hide. The field mouse decides it is better to live humbly without fear. (244) "The Mouse and the Frog" A frog ties his foot to a mouse's and jumps into a field to eat some corn. The frog then jumps into a pond. The mouse drowns and floats to the top, attracting a kite. The kite grabs the mouse and the frog. (245) "The Castaway and the Sea" A castaway blames the sea for his misfortune. The sea says it is the wind that makes her so wild.

## Fables 241-245 Analysis

Fable 241 provides the origin of the children's story of the ant and the grasshopper. The moral of the story is the same in both versions, that one should always prepare for the future. Fable 242 shows that good deeds are returned in time. The story of the field mouse and the town mouse in fable 243 is another that has been often retold in modern children's tales, showing that the bounty of the city has its price. Fable 244 emphasizes the differences between animals that make them ill suited to each other's environments.



# Fables 246-250

## Fables 246-250 Summary

(246) "The Young Men and the Butcher" Two men steal from a butcher. The butcher says that they will not escape the gods. (247) "The Fawn and the Stag" A fawn asks his father, the stag, why he runs from his enemies since he is so large, fast and well armed with antlers. The stag says that whenever he hears a hound, he runs even when he doesn't know where he is running. (248) "The Young Wastrel and the Swallow" A man loses everything but his cloak. He sees a swallow, assumes summer is coming and sells his coat. A winter storm occurs, and the wastrel says the swallow has killed them both. (249) "The Sick Man and the Doctor" A doctor questions a sick man on three separate occasions. Each time, the man gives the doctor a different symptom. The doctor tells him that everything is good. The man tells his relatives he is dying of good symptoms. (250) "The Bat, the Bramble and the Gull" A bat, a bramble and a gull decide to go trading together. On the way to trade, a strong wind capsizes their ship. The bat fears his creditor and only goes out at night. The bramble grabs the clothes of whoever passes by. The gull searches the seashore for his lost copper.

## Fables 246-250 Analysis

Fable 247 teaches that even the large and powerful fear dangerous situations. Fable 248 shows a young man wasting his life and blaming it on an innocent creature. Fable 250 is a nature myth explaining how certain things came to be. According to the editor's note, the historical Aesop most likely wrote most of these types of fables.





# Fables 251-255

## Fables 251-255 Summary

(251) "The Bat and the House-ferrets" A bat falls to the ground, and a house-ferret catches her. The bat says that she isn't a bird; she is a mouse. The ferret lets her go. The bat falls a second time, and another house-ferret attacks, claiming to hate mice. This time the bat tells the truth. The house-ferret lets her go. (252) "The Logs and the Olive" The logs ask the olives and the figs to be king. They don't want to give up their positions. The logs ask the thorn bush. The thorn bush says the logs would have to take shelter under him. (253) "The Woodcutter and Hermes" A woodcutter loses his ax in the river. Hermes appears and dives into the river. He brings up a gold ax and then a silver one. The man said neither is his. Hermes brings up the right ax and gives the man the two others for his honesty. Another man hears the story and throws his ax in the river. Hermes appears and brings up a gold ax. The man says it is his. Hermes makes the man leave without any ax. (254) "The Travelers and the Bear" Two men see a bear. One man climbs a tree, and the other plays dead. The bear sniffs the dead man and leaves. The man climbs down from the tree and asks his friend what the bear whispered in his ear. The man on the ground says the bear told him to find another travel companion. (255) "The Travelers and the Raven" Some travelers come across a one-eyed raven. One man suggests they turn back at the omen. Another man says the bird couldn't prevent losing his eye, so he can't predict the future.

## Fables 251-255 Analysis

Fable 251 shows how a quick mind can save one's life. Fable 253 shows that the gods reward honesty and punish greed. Fables 254 and 255 focus on the sarcastic jokes that the characters make.



# Fables 256-260

## Fables 256-260 Summary

(256) "The Travelers and the Ax" Two travelers find an axe. One claims it. The real owners show up and chase the one who claimed it. (257) "The Travelers and the Plane Tree" Two weary travelers rest under the shade of a plane tree. The travelers agree that the tree is sterile and useless to people. The tree curses the men for using him and then calling him useless. (258) "The Travelers and the Brushwood" Some travelers spot a piece of brushwood from a distance. They assume it is a warship and wait for it to land. The wind pushes the wood closer, and they think it is too small to be warship and must be a cargo ship. It lands on the shore, and they go down to look at it. Seeing that it is just brushwood, they curse themselves for waiting for nothing. (259) "The Traveler and Truth" A man travels through a desert and meets a woman. The woman introduces herself as Truth. The man asks why she has left the city to roam the desert. She says its because liars are everywhere else. (260) "The Traveler and Hermes" A traveler, having a long journey to make, makes a vow to consecrate half of anything he finds to the god Hermes in exchange for a safe journey. The man finds a pouch full of almonds and dates. He eats them and offers the shells and pits to Hermes, saying he is sharing the inside and outside of all he has found.

## Fables 256-260 Analysis

Fable 256 is a tale of greed and punishment. Fable 257 shows the ingratitude of men. The men use the tree for its shade but call it useless because it bears no fruit. This theme is further explored in fable 260. The man promises half of his findings to the god and leaves the god with nothing in the end. Fable 258 concentrates on the folly of expecting something grand, while fable 259 criticizes all men as liars.



# Fables 261-265

## Fables 261-265 Summary

(261) "The Traveler and Chance" A man, worn out from his journey, throws himself down beside a well and sleeps. Chance wakes him, saying that if the man had fallen he would have blamed Chance. (262) "The Asses Appealing to Zeus" The asses ask Zeus to lighten their workload. Zeus tells them that they can escape their misery if they can make a river from their urine. They take him at his word. From that point forward, every time an ass sees another urinating, he stops in his tracks to do the same. (263) "The Ass Bought in the Market" A man takes an ass on a trial basis. He puts the ass in with his other animals, and the ass chooses to stand with the fattest and laziest of the animals. The man takes him back to the market after judging the ass's choice in friends. (264) "The Wild Ass and the Domestic Ass" A wild ass sees a domestic ass and compliments his life of seeming ease. The wild ass comes back later and sees the domestic ass pulling a heavy workload. He realizes the domestic ass must pay a price for his nice life. (265) "The Ass Carrying Salt" An ass carries a heavy load of salt across a river. He slips, and the salt dissolves in the water leaving him a lighter load. He later crosses the river carrying a load of sponges. Thinking he will lighten his load again, he falls on purpose. The sponges soak up the water and make his burden heavier.

## Fables 261-265 Analysis

Fable 261 shows that men will always blame the gods for their misfortune. Fable 262 is a nature myth explaining animal behavior. Fable 263 shows that one's friends reflect on one's own nature. The tale of fable 264, comparing the domestic life to the insecure but free life of the wild animal, is one that is retold throughout the fables. Fable 265 shows that taking shortcuts only creates more work in the long run.



# Fables 266-270

## Fables 266-270 Summary

(266) "The Ass Carrying a Statue of a God" An ass carries a statue of a god on his back as a man leads him to town. The passers-by see the statue and begin to bow. The ass, thinking the people were bowing to him, starts to bray and refuses to move. The owner, realizing what the ass is thinking, beats him with his club and says no one would worship an ass. (267) "The Ass Clothed in the Skin of a Lion, and the Fox" An ass clothes himself in the skin of a lion and goes about frightening all of the animals. He tries to frighten a fox, and the fox says if he hadn't heard the ass bray, he would be afraid too. (268) "The Ass Pronouncing the Horse Happy" An ass envies a horse for having plenty to eat and being well groomed. A war comes, and the ass watches the horseman prepare the horse for war. The horse must wear heavy armor and carry his rider into dangerous battle. Seeing the horse die in the war, the ass changes his mind and pities the horse. (269) "The Ass, the Cock and the Lion" An ass and a cockerel are feeding when a lion pounces on the ass. The cock crows and scares the lion away. The ass, thinking the lion feared him, runs after the lion, and the lion turns around and eats him. (270) "The Ass, the Fox and the Lion" The fox comes across a lion and, to protect himself, tells the lion that he will bring him an ass to feed on. The lion agrees, and the fox goes to get the ass. The fox leads the ass to the hunting pit, and the ass falls in. The lion, seeing the ass in the pit, eats the fox and saves the ass for later.

## Fables 266-270 Analysis

Fables 266, 267 and 269 show the folly of vanity in an ass, when an ass tries to be something he is not. Fable 268 shows that it is pointless to envy others because everyone has their hardships. In fable 270, the lion is untrustworthy and turns on the usually wily fox.



# Fables 271-275

## Fables 271-275 Summary

(271) "The Ass and the Frogs" An ass, carrying a load of wood across a bog, falls into the water. Unable to get up, the ass moans and brays. Some frogs, hearing the commotion, come up and say the ass hasn't been in the water as long as they have, so he should quit braying. (272) "The Ass and the Mule Carrying the Same Heavy Loads" An ass and a mule are trudging along carrying heavy loads. The ass thinks the mule should be able to carry twice as much and says so. The driver takes some of the ass's load and puts it on the mule. The mule ends up carrying both loads. The mule asks the ass to give up his share of food. (273) "The Ass and the Gardener" An ass, belonging to a gardener, appeals to Zeus to change his master. A potter buys the ass, and the ass has to carry an even heavier load. The ass appeals to Zeus again. This time a tanner buys him. The ass, seeing his surroundings, says that his first masters were better; at least they wouldn't tan his hide. (274) "The Ass, the Raven and the Wolf" An ass has a sore on his back. As he grazes in the pasture, a raven lands on his back and begins to pick at his sore. The ass screams in pain and starts to bray and buck. The ass-driver watches and laughs at the ass's misfortune. A wolf passes by and says it's bad enough that the drivers run the wolves away, but now they laugh at the pain of others. (275) "The Ass and the Lap-dog" or "The Dog and Its Master" A man owns a small dog and an ass. He pets the dog and brings it tidbits from his meals whenever the dog frisks and plays. The ass, jealous of the dog, begins to frisk and jump around to please his master. The ass accidentally kicks the man, and the man ties him up in the manger.

## Fables 271-275 Analysis

In fable 271, the differences between animals and their natural environments are highlighted. Because of their differences, they don't understand each other. In fable 272, heavier work is linked to greater rewards. Fable 273 shows that there are always hardships, and some are worse than others. Fable 275 shows the folly of pretending to be something other than oneself.



# Fables 276-280

## Fables 276-280 Summary

(276) "The Ass and the Dog Traveling Together" An ass and a dog find a letter in the road. The ass breaks the seal and reads it aloud. It concerns fodder. The dog asks the ass to skip ahead, as the letter is uninteresting. The ass scans the document and doesn't find anything of interest to the dog. The dog tells the ass that the paper is useless. (277) "The Ass and the Ass-driver" An ass strays off his path and falls over a precipice. The ass-driver grabs the ass by the tail and tries to pull him up. The ass struggles so much that the driver lets him go. (278) "The Ass and the Cicadas" An ass, envious of the cicadas' song, asks them what they eat to sing so well. They tell him that they eat the dew. The ass waits for the dew and starves to death. (279) "The Ass Who Was Taken for a Lion" An ass puts on a lion's skin and poses as a lion. Everyone flees from him. A strong wind blows the skin off him. The people and animals, feeling duped, beat the ass with sticks and clubs. (280) "The Ass Eating the Jerusalem Thorn, and the Fox" An ass eats the prickly Jerusalem Thorn. A fox, seeing this, says he is surprised that something with a soft tongue can eat something so hard.

## Fables 276-280 Analysis

Fable 276 highlights self-centeredness. Fable 277 is similar to the tale of the dog in the well; each animal unwittingly fights its rescuer. Fables 278 and 279 show the problems with one pretending to be something he isn't. In 278, the ass wants to sing like the cicadas and starves to death after taking their advice. In 279, the ass dresses like a lion and scares everyone. When the others find out they were tricked, they beat the ass with stones and clubs.



# Fables 281-285

## Fables 281-285 Summary

(281) "The Ass Pretending to Be Lame, and the Wolf" An ass sees a wolf and tells the wolf that he has a thorn in his hoof and that the wolf should remove it before eating him. The wolf lifts the ass's hoof to remove the thorn, and the ass kicks him hard enough to knock out all of his teeth. The wolf realizes that his nature is to be a butcher not a doctor. (282) "The Bird-catcher and the Wild and Domesticated Pigeons" A bird-catcher attaches his domesticated pigeons to a net. Some wild pigeons come and get caught in the net. The wild pigeons reproach the domestic ones for helping catch them. The domestic birds say they are more worried about their master than they are about other pigeons. (283) "The Bird-catcher and the Crested Lark" A bird-catcher sets a snare. A crested lark asks him what he is doing. The bird-catcher says that he is founding a new city and leaves. The lark, believing the bird-catcher, approaches the snare. The trapped lark says to the bird-catcher that his new city won't have many inhabitants. (284) "The Bird-catcher and the Stork" A bird-catcher catches a stork. The stork begs for release, saying that she does not harm men and kills snakes to help them. The bird-catcher says the stork deserves his fate for landing among the wicked. (285) "The Bird-catcher and the Partridge" A bird-catcher receives a visitor and has no food, so he prepares to kill a partridge. The partridge says that she has helped the bird catcher capture many birds. The bird-catcher says she deserves death for helping to kill her family.

## Fables 281-285 Analysis

In fable 281, one again sees the problems that come from acting in a way that is out of character. The wolf loses out on a meal by doctoring a mule rather than eating it. Fable 282 is one of several that pit domesticated animals against wild ones, and this theme is revisited in fable 285, when the bird-catcher uses it against his own bird to justify killing her. The theme of bird trapping continues in fable 283, a wry joke by a captured lark. Fable 284 shows that the bird-catcher judges the stork by the company the stork keeps.



## Fables 286-290

### Fables 286-290 Summary

(286) "The Hen and the Swallow" A hen finds some snake eggs and sits on them to keep them warm. As she waits for them to hatch, a swallow says the hen is foolish because the snakes will eat the hen first. (287) "The Hen That Laid the Golden Eggs" A beautiful hen lays golden eggs. The owner, greedy for more, decides the hen must have a lump of gold in her belly. He kills her, cuts her open and finds no gold. (288) "The Tail and the Rest of the Body of the Snake" The tail decides that he should lead the snake. The rest of the snake protests but loses the argument. The tail pulls the snake backwards, and it lands in a hole full of stones. The snake bruises her entire body, and the tail begs the head to save them. (289) "The Snake, the House-ferret and the Mice" A snake and a house-ferret fight in their home. The mice of the house come out to watch the fight. The snake and house-ferret see the mice and turn on the mice. (290) "The Snake and the Crab" A crab is always polite to a snake, who is always rude. The crab waits for the snake to sleep, kills him and stretches him out. He says the snake is straight in death, where he wasn't in life.

### Fables 286-290 Analysis

In fable 286, the hen is reminded that animals always follow their nature. Fable 287 shows how a person can bring about their own downfall by being greedy and ungrateful. This story will be familiar to all who know the tale of the Goose that Laid the Golden Egg. Fable 288 revisits the dangers of pretending to be something you aren't. In fable 289, enemies unite against a mutual enemy.





# Fables 291-295

## Fables 291-295 Summary

(291) "The Trodden-on Snake and Zeus" A snake, tired of being stepped on, appeals to Zeus. Zeus tells the snake that if he bites the first person to step on him, no one else will step on him. (292) "The Child Who Ate the Sacrificial Viscera" Some shepherds give a feast for everyone. A woman brings her child. The child, her belly distended from so much food, says that she is bringing up her guts. (293) "The Child Catching Locusts and the Scorpion" A child, catching locusts by the city wall, sees a scorpion and mistakes it for a locust. The child is about to put the scorpion in the jar with his locusts. The scorpion says that if the child had put him in the jar, the locusts would be dead. (294) "The Child and the Raven" A diviner tells a woman that a raven will kill her child. The woman builds a chest to keep the child safe from ravens. One day as she is giving the child food, the child sticks his head out. The hooked handle on the chest falls on top of the child's head and kills him. (295) "The Son and the Painted Lion" An old man dreams that a lion will kill his son, a hunter; so, he confines his son to a house. The old man has magnificent paintings of all kinds of animals put in the house. The son is bored roaming the house, and one day he strikes out at the painting of a lion. He gets a splinter from the painting. The splinter causes an infection and fever, causing the man to die.

## Fables 291-295 Analysis

In fable 291, Zeus encourages the snake to solve his own problems rather than relying on the gods. Fables 294 and 295 show that one cannot escape his or her destiny. In both fables, the parent learns how their child will die. Both parents lock their children up to prevent the death. In both fables, the children die in the way it was prophesized.



## Fables 296-300

### Fables 296-300 Summary

(296) "The Child Thief and His Mother" A mother never disciplines her child for stealing. The child grows up to be a thief and is carted off to jail. He tells his mother that it is her fault for not correcting him when he was a child. (297) "The Child Bather" A child is close to drowning and calls for help. A passerby criticizes him for being reckless. The child says he will listen to lectures when he is safe. (298) "The Receiver of a Deposit of Money, and the God Horkos" A man receives a deposit of money from his friend. He decides to leave so that he will not have to repay the money. As he is leaving the city, he meets an old man and asks his name. The old man says that he is the god Horkos, whose name means Oath, and that he is seeking out the ungodly. The next day, the man swears that he never received any money. The god Horkos comes and hurls him from a cliff. (299) "The Father and His Daughters" A man has two daughters. He marries one to a gardener and the other to a potter. He visits the gardener's wife and asks how she is. She says she would like the gods to send rain for their gardens. He visits the potter's wife and asks her the same question. She would like to pray to the gods to keep the sun shining so that she can dry the pots. The man doesn't know what to pray for. (300) "The Partridge and the Man" A man catches a partridge. The partridge pleads for her life saying that she will help him catch plenty of partridges if he lets her go. The man says she should die for being so willing to kill her friends.

### Fables 296-300 Analysis

Fable 296 shows what happens when a parent does not discipline their child, but the child also refuses to take responsibility. The child in fable 297 also makes a critical quip, but this time it is complaining to a passerby who lectures him instead of helping him. Fable 298 is a simple tale of a god giving a man his punishment for wrongdoing. Similar to the fables that highlight differences between animals, fable 299 shows that what is good for one person is not always good for another. Fable 300 teaches one to be loyal to his friends. The partridge is willing to trick his friends to save himself. The bird catcher kills him for his hypocrisy.



# Fables 301-305

## Fables 301-305 Summary

(301) "The Thirsty Pigeon" A thirsty pigeon sees a basin of water in a painting and, believing it to be real, hurls herself towards it. She breaks the tips of her wings and falls to the ground where a passerby picks her up. (302) "The Pigeon and the Crow" A domestic pigeon boasts of her fertility. A crow hears and tells her to stop boasting about her children being born into slavery. (303) "The Two Carrying-pouches" Prometheus creates man and bestows two pouches upon him. The pouch worn in the front contains the deficiencies of others. The pouch that hangs in the back contains one's own faults. Therefore men can see the faults of others but not their own. (304) "The Monkey and the Fisherman" A monkey sees some fisherman casting their nets into the water. He picks up their net and, trying to mimic them, gets caught in it. He realizes he should have learned to fish before trying it. (305) "The Monkey and the Dolphin" A monkey is on a ship that capsizes and is picked up by a dolphin. The dolphin assumes the monkey is a man and asks if he knows Piraeus. The monkey thinks Piraeus is a man and claims to be a very good friend. The dolphin drowns the monkey for lying.

## Fables 301-305 Analysis

Fable 302 is a continuation of the tales comparing domesticity to the wild life. Fable 303 shows that men are quick to judge others but slow to look at their own misdeeds. Fable 304 reiterates the theme of pretending to be something one isn't. The monkey gets caught in the net because he is pretending to be a fisherman.



# Fables 306-310

## Fables 306-310 Summary

(306) "The Monkey and the Camel" The animals assemble, and a monkey begins to dance. The animals cheer, and a camel is jealous. The camel begins to dance but is so bad at it that the other animals drive him away with sticks and curses. (307) "The Monkey's Children" A monkey gives birth to twins. For one twin, she gives all her love and caring. She neglects the second one. The first one, receiving all her mother's caresses, suffocates in her mother's arms. The second monkey lives to maturity. (308) "The Sea Voyagers" A ship is out on the water when a violent storm blows through. The ship threatens to capsize, and the passengers begin to appeal to their gods and tear at their clothing. The storm passes, and the passengers begin to celebrate. The steersman tells them to celebrate but to remember another storm could come. (309) "The Rich Man and the Tanner" A rich man moves next door to a tanner. Unable to stand the smells coming from the tanner's house, the rich man urges the tanner to move. The tanner continually postpones the move, and the rich man becomes accustomed to the smell and stops pestering the tanner. (310) "The Rich Man and the Mourners" A rich man hires mourners for his daughter's funeral. His wife and other daughter watch the mourners beat their chests and moan. The mother says that she would not be surprised if they were being paid to mourn.

## Fables 306-310 Analysis

In fable 306, another animal is punished for trying to be something he is not. Fable 307 shows that hardships can strengthen one while coddling can suffocate. Fable 309 shows that one can get used to anything with time.



# Fables 311-315

## Fables 311-315 Summary

(311) "The Shepherd and the Sea" A shepherd sees that the water is calm and decides to go trading. He sells his sheep and buys dates and figs to trade. A storm comes, and he loses his cargo. Another man sees the calmness of the water, and the shepherd warns him that the sea must want more cargo. (312) "The Shepherd and the Dog Who Fawned Upon Sheep" A shepherd has a huge dog and feeds it the stillborn lambs and dying sheep. As the sheep rest in the fold, the shepherd notices the dog approach some ewes and fawn upon them. The shepherd curses the dog. (313) "The Shepherd and the Wolf Cubs" A shepherd raises some wolf cubs. When they mature, the wolves eat the sheep. The shepherd realizes he should have destroyed the wolves rather than raise them. (314) "The Shepherd and the Wolf Raised with the Dogs" A shepherd finds a newborn wolf cub and raises it with his dogs. The wolf grows into maturity and guards the sheep with the dogs. The wolf, however, kills sheep on the sly and shares it with the dogs. The shepherd realizes what is happening and kills the wolf and hangs him from a tree. (315) "The Shepherd and the Wolf Cub" A shepherd raises a wolf cub to steal sheep from his neighbors' flock. The wolf tells the shepherd to watch out for his flock.

## Fables 311-315 Analysis

In fable 311, the sea is personified as a trickster luring cargo out into storms. Fables 313 and 314 show that an animal always follows its nature, a primary theme running through the fables. Fable 315 illustrates that when one teaches a child bad habits, that child will grow into an adult with worse habits.



# Fables 316-320

## Fables 316-320 Summary

(316) "The Shepherd and the Sheep" A shepherd drives his sheep into an oak wood. He lays his cloak on the ground beneath an oak tree and shakes down acorns for the sheep to eat. The sheep eat the acorns and the cloak. The shepherd says the sheep provide wool to others but eats the cloak of the person who feeds them. (317) "The Shepherd Who Let a Wolf into the Fold, and the Dog" A shepherd herds his sheep into the fold and closes a wolf in with them. The dog sees it and marvels that a man who makes a living with sheep would let in a wolf. (318) "The Joking Shepherd" A shepherd plays a practical joke on the villagers. He cries that wolves are attacking his sheep and laughs as the townspeople come running to help him. One day, some wolves appear, and the shepherd cries for help. The town, thinking he is playing his joke, ignores his cries, and he loses his sheep. (319) "Polemos and Hybris" Polemos, the god of war, marries Hybris, the goddess of wanton violence. He goes wherever she goes. (320) "The River and the Hide" A river sees an ox hide floating in her waters and asks its name. The hide says its name is Hard. The river increases her current and tells it to change its name, for soon it will be soft.

## Fables 316-320 Analysis

Fable 318 is the origin of the children's fable, The Boy Who Cried Wolf. The shepherd lies so much that when a wolf does attack no one believes him. Just like the children's parable, this fable illustrates how important it is to tell the truth. Fable 319 makes the simple statement that with war comes violence, and fable 320 makes a pun on the fact that running water wear down hides.



# Fables 321-325

## Fables 321-325 Summary

(321) "The Sheared Sheep" A sheep, sheared too close, turns to his shearer and tells him to shear higher if he wants the wool or to kill him if he wants the meat. (322) "Prometheus and Men" On Zeus's orders, Prometheus makes both men and beasts. Zeus, seeing more animals than men, orders Prometheus to turn some of the beasts into men. The result is some men look like humans but have the souls of beasts. (323) "The Rose and the Amaranth" An amaranth, growing next to a rose, compliments the rose on its beauty. The rose says that it lives only for a few days, but the amaranth always flowers and is forever young. (324) "The Pomegranate Tree, the Apple Tree, the Olive Tree and the Bramble Bush" The pomegranate tree, apple tree and olive tree argue about who has the best fruit. The bramble bush asks that they not fight among themselves. (325) "The Trumpeter" A trumpeter summons the troops. The enemy captures him, and he begs for his life. He says that he has not hurt anyone and has nothing but his horn. The enemy says he will die for rousing others to fight.

## Fables 321-325 Analysis

Fable 321 is a joke by a wry sheep. Fable 322 explains the origin of men who behave like animals. Another example of a comparison between the positive attributes of two natural things is found in fable 323. Fable 325 shows that it is better to be a fighter than to be someone who only inspires violence in others.



## Fables 326-330

### Fables 326-330 Summary

(326) "The Mole and His Mother" A mole tells his mother that he can see. His mother, wanting to test him, gives him a piece of frankincense and asks him what it is. The mole says that it is a pebble. His mother says that he has lost his sense of smell as well as his sight. (327) "The Wild Boar and the Fox" A wild boar sharpens his tusks against a tree. A fox asks him why he does this since there are no enemies about. The boar says that if enemies approach, he will not have time to sharpen his tusks. (328) "The Wild Boar, the Horse and the Huntsman" A wild boar and a horse share the same pasture. The horse, tired of the boar ruining the grass and muddying the water, calls upon a huntsman for help. The huntsman will kill the boar if the horse will wear a bridle and carry him. The horse agrees. The huntsman kills the boar and then takes the horse home and ties him up. (329) "The Sow and the Dog Insulting One Another" The sow swears by Aphrodite that she will tear the dog to pieces. The dog says that the sow swears by Aphrodite, though she will not allow impure pig flesh in her temple. The sow retorts that the goddess will kill anyone who eats or mistreats her in anyway. (330) "The Wasps, the Partridges and the Ploughman" Some wasps and some partridges beg a ploughman for water. The partridges say that they will dig his vines, and the wasps promise to sting thieves, if the ploughman will let them drink. The ploughman says he has two oxen and will save his water for them.

### Fables 326-330 Analysis

Fable 326 is a joke based on the common idea that moles are blind. Fable 327 teaches one to be prepared for the unknown. The boar sharpens his tusks during peaceful times so that he is ready when his enemies are about. In fable 328, the horse exchanges inconvenience for captivity. Fable 329 shows how each animal interprets Aphrodite's dictates in its own way, the sow interpreting them to her advantage.





# Fables 331-335

## Fables 331-335 Summary

(331) "The Wasp and the Snake" A wasp stings a snake mercilessly. The snake, unable to bear the pain, sticks his head under a wagon wheel and kills them both. (332) "The Bull and the Wild Goats" A lion chases a bull. The bull runs into a cave and finds wild goats. The goats gore and butt him, and he says that he endures them because what is outside is worse. (333) "The Peacock and the Crane" A peacock criticizes a crane's color. The crane says that he sings to the heavens, while the cockerel can only mount hens. (334) "The Peacock and the Jackdaw" The birds consult each other to decide upon a king. The peacock demands to be king because he is the most beautiful. The jackdaw says that beauty won't help them when a lion attacks. (335) "The Cicada and the Fox" A fox hears a cicada singing in a tree. He compliments the singing and begs the cicada to come down so that he can see it. The cicada drops a leaf and watches the fox pounce on it. The cicada tells the fox that he has seen cicada wings in foxes' feces and does not trust them.

## Fables 331-335 Analysis

Fable 331 shows that death is preferable to some types of pain, especially if one's enemy dies in the process. Fable 332 shows just the opposite. Rather than face certain death, the bull endures pain at the hands of wild goats. Fable 333 shows the difference between animals. Each is proud of his own nature. The peacock shows this same pride in fable 334. The fox tries to prey on a similar pride in the cicada in fable 335, but the cicada saves himself by distrusting the fox.



## Fables 336-340

### Fables 336-340 Summary

(336) "The Cicada and the Ants" In the winter, the ants dry their grain. The cicada asks them for some food. They ask why she did not store up during the summer as they had. She says that she was much too busy singing. The ants make fun of her saying that since she sang all summer, she can dance all winter. (337) "The Wall of the House and the Stake" A house wall asks the stake why he pierces her so brutally. The stake says it is not her fault. It is the person who hits her from behind. (338) "The Archer and the Lion" A skillful archer goes up a mountain to hunt. All of the animals, except the lion, flee. The lion challenges the archer, and the archer shoots him with an arrow. The archer says the arrow is just his messenger. Now the lion will have to deal with him. The lion runs, but a fox tells him not to flee. The lion is more afraid of the message than the messenger. (339) "The Billy-Goat and the Vine" A billy goat nibbles on the bursting buds of a young vine. The vine says, "You needn't think I'll provide any less wine than is needed when they come to sacrifice you." (340) "The Hyenas" They say hyenas change their sex and alternate between male and female each year. A male hyena attempts an unnatural sex act with a female, and she tells him that he will have the same done to him eventually.

### Fables 336-340 Analysis

Fable 336 offers another origin tale for the "Ant and the Grasshopper" parable. Fable 339 is a story of revenge. The vine will rejoice and provide wine for the sacrifice of the goat that eats his buds. Fable 340 is a lewd joke about the hyena, which was believed to change gender each year.



# Fables 341-345

## Fables 341-345 Summary

(341) "The Hyena and the Fox" A girl hyena fancies a fox and curses him for rebuffing her. The fox says he has no way of knowing if the hyena wants to be his girlfriend or his boyfriend. (342) "The Sow and the Bitch, and the Ease of Bearing Offspring" A sow and a bitch argue about who has the easiest time bearing offspring. The bitch says that she gives birth fastest. The sow reminds the bitch that she gives birth to blind puppies. (343) "The Bald Horseman" A bald man puts fake hair on his head and rides along the road. A strong wind knocks the hair from his head, and the people laugh at him. He says that if his hair won't stay on his head, is it any wonder the fake hair won't? (344) "The Miser" A miser buries his gold in a hole and goes to visit it every day. A laborer figures out what he is doing and steals the gold, leaving an empty hole. The miser cries out in despair. A passerby tells him not to worry, because when he had his gold, he made no use of it. (345) "The Blacksmith and His Puppy" A blacksmith has a puppy that sleeps while he forges. Whenever the blacksmith sits down to eat, the puppy is right by his side. The blacksmith says that the dog sleeps when he bangs his anvil but is awake when he moves his jaws.

## Fables 341-345 Analysis

Fable 341 is a play on words expressing the ancient belief that hyenas change their sex once a year. In fable 342, again two animals' natural differences are highlighted, and each takes pride in its own accomplishments. Fable 344 shows that one will lose a fortune when they don't put it to good use.



# Fables 346-350

## Fables 346-350 Summary

(346) "Winter and Spring" Winter mocks Spring, saying that as soon as Spring arrives people have no peace. They go to meadows or take long voyages. Winter boasts that he is an absolute ruler, and when he comes, he forces people's eyes down and makes them stay indoors for as long as he likes. Spring says that is why everyone is so glad to see Winter go. (347) "The Swallow and the Serpent" A swallow nests inside a court of justice and flies off for a little while. A serpent creeps up and eats her young. The swallow comes back and, finding her children gone, begins to wail and moan. Another swallow comes to her and tells her that others have lost their children in this manner. She realizes she is a victim in a house of justice. (348) "The Swallow and the Crow Obstinately Contending over Their Beauty" A swallow and a crow argue over their looks. The crow says his beauty survives the winter. (349) "The House-martin and the Birds" A house-martin warns the birds that they must cut off mistletoe from the trees, or they should beg men not to line their traps with it. The other birds laugh at her. She goes to live with a man and is welcomed for her intelligence. The other birds are trapped and eaten by men, while the martin lives protected and sheltered by them, nesting fearlessly in their homes. (350) "The Boastful Swallow and the Crow" A swallow boasts of being an Athenian princess. She goes on to say that Tereus raped her and cut out her tongue. The crow interrupts her and asks how she can talk so much with no tongue.

## Fables 346-350 Analysis

In fable 346, Winter learns that even though he is powerful, he is not loved. Fable 347 is an ironic tale. A crime is committed against the swallow inside the hall of justice and nothing can be done about it. Fables 348 and 350 focus on the vanity of the swallow.



# Fables 351-355

## Fables 351-355 Summary

(351) "The Tortoise and the Eagle" A tortoise begs an eagle to teach him to fly. The eagle explains that the tortoise was not made to fly, but the tortoise won't hear it. The eagle takes the tortoise up in the air and lets go of him. The tortoise falls to the ground and smashes to pieces. (352) "The Tortoise and the Hare" A tortoise and a hare decide to have a race. The hare, sure of his speed, lies down by the side of the road and falls asleep. The tortoise, knowing his slowness, never stops and passes the sleeping hare to win the race. (353) "The Wild Geese and the Cranes" Some wild geese and cranes forage for food in the same grassland. Hunters appear. The cranes fly away because they are so light, but the geese, hindered by their heavy bodies, die at the hunters' hands. (354) "The Pots" An earthenware pot and a bronze pot float downstream in a river. The earthenware pot tells the bronze one to swim further away so that he doesn't break. (355) "The Parrot and the House-ferret" A man buys a parrot and allows it to fly freely in his home. The parrot perches on the hearth and begins to cackle in a pleasant way. The house-ferret sees this and becomes angry. Why should the parrot be allowed to make so much noise when he, who was born in the house, is beaten for making noise? The parrot replies that his voice doesn't irritate as much as the ferret's.

## Fables 351-355 Analysis

Fable 351 is another fable teaching the importance of being oneself and not trying to be something one is not. Fable 352 provides the origin for the children's story of the "The Tortoise and the Hare." In it, the tortoise is aware of his weakness, so he compensates for it. The hare, on the other hand, is only aware of his strengths and loses the race because of it. Fable 353 and 355 emphasizes that animals' fates are determined by their natures.



## Fables 356-358

### Fables 356-358 Summary

(356) "The Flea and the Boxer" A flea lands on the toe of a sick boxer and takes a bite of him. The boxer tries to crush the flea, but the flea jumps away. He hopes Herakles will help him with his opponent more than he helped with the flea. (357) "The Flea and the Man" A flea irritates a man relentlessly. The man catches the flea and asks why he continuously bites him. The flea says it is the way his kind lives, and they cannot do very much harm. The man says he will kill the flea to keep it from breeding. (358) "The Flea and the Ox" A flea asks an ox why he toils for men when the flea is able to bite them and feast on their blood. The ox says that he is grateful to humans because they often rub his shoulders and forehead. The flea says that if he is rubbed he will die.

### Fables 356-358 Analysis

Fable 356 illustrates how man will call on the gods for help with even the smallest of tasks. If the gods don't answer, then man will blame them for their ill fortune even if man could have solved the problem himself. Fable 357 and 358 emphasize that animals must act according to their nature.



# Characters

## Aesop

Aesop does not appear in very many fables. When he does appear, it is a sure sign that he did not write the fable. Aesop is the master wit. The very few fables listing him as a character portray a man with a quick wit who refuses to be insulted by anyone of lower intelligence.

Very little is known about the historical Aesop. He was a Greek slave, according to the editors, and was captured during a war. He worked as a clerk or personal secretary to his owners and possessed a quick wit and a knack for telling animal stories. He made a name for himself telling these stories, and many animal stories have been credited to him even though he was most likely not the author. He lived in the early sixth century BC. Many scholars believe he was taken to Egypt, which would explain the use of Egyptian rather than Greek animals in many of his fables. Many scholars, including Plato, refer to Aesop in their plays and other works.

As a character in the fables, Aesop is quick to use his wit to outsmart those around him. He shows no visible signs of offence at any insult. Instead, he simply responds with wise words and a pithy statement.

## Zeus

Zeus, king of the gods, is merely a character for Aesop to use as a foil to humans and animals. In fable 119, Zeus makes the fox king of all beasts. He then tests the fox by releasing a beetle in front of him. The fox reverts to his nature and chases the beetle. Zeus is sensitive to criticism. In fable 124, he is so angered by Momos's criticism of his creation that he banishes Momos from Olympus. Zeus is also sensitive to slights. When the tortoise does not attend Zeus's wedding because she does not want to leave her home, Zeus condemns her to carry her home with her for all eternity.

## The Fox

Other than the lion, the fox appears in more fables than any other animal. The fox is wily and generally wins any battle of wits against his enemy. The fox outsmarts shepherds, dogs and even lions. He is sly and tricks his foils into doing exactly what he wants with just a few words. He does not always win. In fable 30, he climbs into the hollow of an oak tree to eat food he finds there. He eats so much that he is too fat to get out again. When he sees grapes too high to reach, he blames the grapes, calling them sour. The fox, however, is intelligent. In fable 34, he seeks help from a woodcutter. The woodcutter hides him but tries to tell the hunters where the fox is with gestures rather than words. The fox knows this and calls him on it saying, "I would thank you if your gestures and your conduct had agreed with your words."



## The Lion

The lion appears in more fables than any other animal. The lion as described in fable 195 is royal and just. He is a king who brings all the animals together to seek mutual agreements. The lion is a contradictory character, however. The lion of fable 196, having grown too old to hunt, tricks animals into his cave by feigning illness. He is outwitted by a fox in that fable. In fable 198, the lion, having fallen in love with a ploughman's daughter, agrees to rip out his teeth and claws. After upholding his end of the agreement, he is no longer a threat, and the ploughman reneges on the deal. The lion also loses out to his own greed. In fable 204, the lion comes across a sleeping hare. Rather than eating the hare, the lion chases a deer. He loses the deer and goes back to find the hare has run off. Aesop's lion is at times just and kingly, and at other times, easily outwitted and greedy.

## The Jackdaw

The jackdaw, a bird of the raven family, is a covetous creature. He envies the raven, the eagle and pigeons. His envy is his downfall. In fable 5, he envies an eagle and tries to imitate him. He swoops down and tries to carry off a ram, only to get his claws caught in the ram's fleece. In fable 161, the jackdaw disdains the company of other jackdaws and tries to share his life with ravens. The ravens, unfamiliar with his shape and voice, chase the jackdaw away. The jackdaw tries to go back to his kin and is denied their companionship. The jackdaw is the outsider throughout the fables.

## The Ploughman

The ploughman represents a simple everyman in the fables. He is a man who is at times kind and at times vengeful. In fable 79, the ploughman sees an eagle caught in a net. He is so taken by the eagle's beauty that he frees it. The eagle, grateful, saves the ploughman from being crushed to death. The ploughman shows his vengeful side when a snake kills his child in fable 81. He lies in wait for the snake, and when he sees it, he strikes out at it with an ax with all his strength. In fable 80, the ploughman is on the verge of starvation and slaughters his animals one by one in order to survive. Finally, he has to resort to killing his oxen. His dogs run away, afraid that if he would kill the animals that provide his living, they are surely next. The acts show the ploughman to be at the whim of fate. He can only react to what he is given and behave accordingly.

## The Shepherd

The shepherd also represents an everyman. He, however, is a constant victim of fate. He rarely comes out on top. He tends to be foolish in his endeavors. In fable 314, he takes in a wolf cub and raises it with his dogs. The shepherd thinks that the wolf will help guard his flock. The wolf, however, ends up killing most of his sheep, and the shepherd has to kill him. The shepherd also wears out the patience of the townspeople





in fable 318. He calls out that a wolf is attacking his sheep just to see them come running. When a wolf really does attack, the townspeople don't believe his cries, and he has to watch the wolf carry off his sheep.

## Hermes

Hermes, messenger for the gods, is portrayed as vain and full of trickery. In fable 108, he disguises himself as a mortal to see how men revere him. He goes to a sculptor's workshop. There, he asks the price on statues of Zeus and Hera. Learning their price, he asks about the statue of himself. The sculptor tells him that he will gladly give him the statue of Hermes for free if he buys the other two. Hermes is humiliated again in fable 110. He wants to test the prophetic powers of Teiresias, the blind prophet. Hermes, disguised as a mortal, steals the man's cattle and reports them missing. The prophet, rightly, sees that it was Hermes who stole his cattle and tells him so. Hermes, a god, is reduced to a foolish character in the witty tales of Aesop.

## The Eagle

The eagle is consecrated to Zeus, meaning that he holds her higher than other birds and most animals. Being held in a high esteem by Zeus does not guarantee protection for the eagle. In fable 4, he is pursued and tormented by a small scarab beetle. Even Zeus cannot protect her nest from the beetle's wrath. In fable 6, a man catches the eagle and clips her wings. When the eagle is set free, she must come up with ways to charm the man to keep from being captured again.

## The Wolf

The wolf is a proud creature. He considers himself better than dogs that have to rely on their masters to feed them. He is cunning like the fox, and he is only rarely outsmarted. In fable 219, the wolf falls in love with his shadow. He is so proud of its length that he believes he should not fear the lion. When a lion does capture him, he realizes too late that his pride is his downfall.



# Objects/Places

## Caves

In many of the fables, the cave is a place of trickery. In fable 17, a goatherd finds some wild goats and herds them into a cave with his own. He plans to keep the wild goats, so he feeds them better than he feeds his own. When he lets all of the goats out again, the wild ones run away saying they cannot trust one who would treat strange goats better than his own goats. An aging lion uses a cave to trick his prey into coming to him. A lion and a fox use a cave to lure a stag to his death twice.

## Statues

Statues provide humiliation for many characters in the fables. In fable 131, a man keeps a statue of a demi-god in his home. He offers it an abundance of sacrifices only to be told by the god himself that he must stop squandering his wealth. In fable 266, an ass carrying a statue of a god assumes that the travelers in his path are bowing down to him. The ass, full of pride, refuses to go any further, and his owner beats him for his impudence. Even the gods themselves face humiliation when there is a statue involved. In fable 108, the god Hermes disguises himself as a mortal man to find out how esteemed he was in the eyes of man. He goes to a sculptor and asks his prices for various statues. When he asks about the statue of himself, the sculptor tells him that he can have the statue of Hermes free if he purchases two of the higher deities.

## Trees

Many of the fables that involve trees treat the trees as characters rather than objects. The trees complain about their fate. In fable 99, the oak tree complains to Zeus about men cutting him down. Zeus says it is the tree's own fault for being so useful to carpenters. The trees argue and boast among themselves. In fable 101, a silver fir tree boasts that it is beautiful and slender, and therefore it is better than a bramble. The bramble replies that he would rather be a bramble than worry about a woodcutter's ax. The trees also pass judgment on wrongdoers. In fable 214, a man murders a traveler and claims his hands are stained from climbing a mulberry tree. When the murderer is caught and hanged from the tree, the tree tells him that he has no sympathy because, "You are the one who committed the murder, and yet you wiped the blood on me."

## The Fields/Pastures

Most of the fables take place in either a field or a pasture. Any fable involving a wolf or a sheep takes place in a field or pasture.



## **The Pond**

Any fables involving frogs take place in a pond.

## **The River**

The river is not mentioned very often, but some fables do take place there. Mainly, the river's current drives an animal or, in the case of fable 144, the animal's feces up or down stream.

## **Mount Olympus**

Mount Olympus is the home of the gods. Very few fables take place there, but the ones that do deal with the pride and arrogance of the gods.

## **The Asp**

The asp is a snake. The asp did not exist in ancient Greece, so any fable that mentions or contains an asp is most likely Egyptian in origin.

## **The Ax**

The ax is a symbol of hard work. As a tool, it only appears in a few fables. The fables containing an ax usually deal with dishonesty. In fable 253, a woodcutter loses his ax, and Hermes retrieves it and a silver ax for him. Another man tries to take advantage of Hermes and loses both his ax and any favor the god might have given him.

## **The Sacrificial Viscera**

When an animal is sacrificed to the gods, it is a custom for the people to eat its viscera. Usually, the viscera include the heart, lungs, liver and kidneys. The sacrificial viscera play a part in fable 292.



# Themes

## One Cannot Hide His or Her True Nature

Throughout the fables, one sees that the nature of a being cannot be changed through outward appearances. One also sees that the nature of some beings is evident through their appearance. In fable 76, a house-ferret begs the goddess Aphrodite to turn her into a girl so that she can marry a man. Aphrodite complies, and the girl marries her lover. Aphrodite then sets a test by releasing a mouse in the wedding chamber. The girl reverts to her house-ferret nature and chases the mouse. Zeus, in fable 119, makes a fox king of all animals. Zeus, like Aphrodite, tests the being he has elevated. He releases a cockchafer beetle in front of the fox, and the fox begins to chase it, showing his true nature. Whether one is dressed as a king or a beautiful gracious young maid, one cannot change or hide his or her true self.

In fable 54, a blind man is used to recognizing things by touch. Someone hands him a wolf-cub, and although he can't be completely sure what type of animal it is, he knows that it should not be allowed near a flock of sheep. This fable illustrates that not only is the nature of a being apparent from birth but that nature cannot be changed. This point is perfectly illustrated in fable 313. A shepherd finds some wolf cubs and raises them with great care. He intends for them to guard his flock when they mature. They grow to maturity and begin to butcher his flock. Even though they were not raised in the wild, they have the nature of killers, and that simply can't be changed.

## The Brutality of Day-to-Day Life in Ancient Times

If there is one overarching theme of the fable collection, it is that life is brutal. Throughout the fables, one sees violence, death, treachery and very little redemption. The very first fable sets the tone for the theme of brutality. In fable 1, Zeus tells good fortune and ill fortune that they should appear to men one at a time. Ill fortune lives close to man, and good fortune must come down from the heavens. Ill fortune constantly assails man, while good fortune only arrives at long intervals.

In fable 3, an eagle and fox are friends, but that does not stop the eagle from eating the fox's young. The fox in retaliation eats the eagle's young in front of her. Such brutality is common throughout the fables. Wolves slaughter sheep with no retribution. Animals partner up to kill others for food. These things are all very matter-of-fact and commonplace. In fable 4, a beetle pleads with an eagle for the life of a hare. The eagle not only disdains the beetle's small size, but he eats the hare in front of the beetle. From that point on, the beetle gives the eagle no peace. He even defies Zeus to carry out his revenge. Murder, savagery and revenge are everyday occurrences in the fables. Unlike the Aesop of children's literature, there is no real moralistic cause and effect. There is only brutality.



## One Cannot Escape His Fate

Fate is an overwhelming theme of the fables. No inanimate object nor animal nor human being can escape the fate laid out by the gods. In fable 99, an oak tree appeals to Zeus to stop men from chopping him down. Zeus responds that it is the oak tree's own fault for being so useful to carpenters. It is his fate to be chopped down because of his very nature.

In fable 295, an old man dreams that his son will be killed by a lion. He does everything he can to prevent this. He builds a house for his son, a hunter, and makes him stay there. He decorates the house with paintings of game. The man's son approaches a painting of a lion, and he is so frustrated with being kept indoors that he strikes out at it. The painting falls on him and kills him. His fate is fulfilled. The lion kills him.



# Style

## Point of View

Each fable is told from the point of view of an omniscient narrator. The narrator, presumed to be Aesop, tells the fables the way one would tell a joke at a bar or a party. Each tale shows wit and insight into the nature of its characters. Animals and inanimate objects have a voice. In fable 101, a bramble and a fir tree insult each other. In fable 257, a plane tree takes umbrage with the insults of two men resting in its shade. In fable 214, a mulberry tree passes judgment on a murderer.

The gods, highest of all beings, humanized in their vanities and foibles, become mere characters rather than high deities. In fable 108, Hermes falls victim to his own vanity when trying to buy a statue of himself. In fable 4, Zeus, king of the gods, is tricked into betraying his consecrated eagle by a small scarab beetle.

While no single fable gives a character's point of view, each fable is rife with the perspective of the more moral animal, person, deity or object. The narrator of these fables knows the nature of his characters and their motivations. The most interesting thing about the point of view in the collection is that of the moralist. The morals provided with the fables were never a part of the original tales. Orators who used the fables to drive home their point usually attached the morals at a later date. The fables can be compared to modern day anecdotes in a political speech.

## Setting

The fables are pastoral in setting. Many take place in fields and pastures or on farms. Some take place in rural markets. The difference, however, is that the setting makes very little difference when it comes to morality. In a typical pastoral tale, the characters tend to be more moral and ethical because of their closeness to nature. In these fables, nature itself is sometimes the amoral character as well as the ethical counterpart. In fable 73, the sun and wind play a game at the expense of an innocent traveler.

Each fable is set in a natural environment. Most of the animal-based fables take place in either pastures or rivers. Fables dealing with mules, foxes, wolves and sheep usually take place in pastures. Others are set in barnyards, caves or mangers. The fables relating to humans generally take place on journeys, in fields or, sometimes, in their homes. Many of the fables dealing with humans are set on the road. Characters are usually travelers who meet with their comeuppance along the way, typically at the hands of an animal.



## Language and Meaning

The fables, far from the moralistic children's tales one would expect, are in a joke format. Generally, the tone of each fable is either a joke with a punch line or a straight one liner. A few of the fables are puns on archaic words. The editor's notes explain the exact translation or, if there is no exact translation, give an explanation of the word's usage. Interestingly, the morals rarely make sense in terms of the fable. This is because collectors of the tales attached the morals later. Because of their later addition, many of the morals appear out of place and even downright silly. Very few of them match the wit and insight of the fable.

The editors make it clear that these fables are simply credited to Aesop. They are not necessarily his work or the work of Greek folklore. Many of the fables trace back to Egyptian or Libyan origin. Most of the fables, especially those centering on animals, are barbaric or savage in content and language. Since the fables are basically jokes, many are downright crude in their language. The tone of the fables is jocular rather than wise and tends to focus on wit rather than revelation. There are plenty of inaccuracies regarding the animals in the fables. Some speak of wild boars hunting for game and asses stealing carcasses from lions. This is to be expected, however, when trees speak to men and animals reply to each other in words.

## Structure

The book is a collection of 358 fables. The fables are numbered. According to the introduction, scholars reference each fable by their number rather than their title. The fables are numbered alphabetically according to their Greek titles. The book is a reference work rather than a work of literature. Looking at the fables as a group, one can see patterns of repeated morals and of repeated types of stories. However, one is meant to refer to it for a particular fable to meet one's needs, as one would a dictionary or encyclopedia. The problem with using the book as a reference is that it has no tools for reference. There is no table of contents or index, which makes referencing the fables difficult.

The very few references in the book are in the form of the introduction and the editor's notes. The editor's notes usually point out obscure translations and ancient word uses. Other times, the notes explain the historical context of the fable or the origin of the fable. The origins of the fables are usually identified by the use of a particular animal or phrasing. Most of the fables have morals attached to them. Since the morals are not a part of the original text, they are usually italicized to distinguish between them and the original work.



## Quotes

"How unfortunate I am! My feet, which I had denigrated, could have saved me, whereas my antlers, on which I prided myself, have caused my death!" Fable 102, pg. 80

"Fools! How can you rejoice? The Sun dries out all the marshland. If he takes a wife and has a child similar to himself, imagine how much worse we would suffer!" Fable 127, pg. 97

"Stop squandering your wealth, my friend. For if you spend everything and become poor, you'll only take it out on me." Fable 131, pg. 99

"I no longer dread death now that I see he who has caused it sharing the same fate." Fable 132, pg. 99

"How unfortunate I am! I wanted to catch my prey and I did not see that I myself would become Death's prey." Fable 137, pg. 103

"From the turn of the race course I am reduced to such a turn as this." Fable 138 pg. 103

"Now go and line up among the foot-soldiers. For from a horse you have changed me into an ass. How do you expect me to change back from an ass into a horse again?" Fable 142, pg. 106

"It is not only when I dance that I lack grace; I even lack it when I walk." Fable 147, pg. 109

"Oh, don't blame me. It's simply the nature of the locality, you know. True, you can find enough to live on there, but you just can't bring it back with you." Fable 149, pg. 110

"Mother, if you want to teach me, walk straight yourself. I will watch you and then I will copy you." Fable 149, pg. 110

"It's all the same to me. Why should I put myself out to save the beast when he wants to perish?" Fable 155, pg. 115

"You've got it all wrong friend. You're just living off hope. Hope feeds illusions but not the stomach." Fable 160, pg. 117

"Oh, wretched raven, how can I trust you, who have disavowed your first master and cheated him?" Fable 166, pg. 123

"Ah! You should not blame me but our master, for it was he who taught me not to work and to live instead from the work of others." Fable 175, pg. 129





"Hey you, either bite me or kiss me, so that I can know whether you are my enemy or my friend." Fable 182, pg. 134

"Stop, comrades! Do not do yourself harm! For come and see - there are some animals here who are even more fearful than we are!" Fable 191, pg. 141

"You are mistaken, friend, if you believe that I would come down. I have mistrusted foxes ever since the day when I saw the wings of a cicada in a fox's droppings." Fable 335, pg. 245



## Topics for Discussion

Choose three fables and discuss the discrepancies between the fable's content and the attached moral.

In fable 18, a master dotes on an ugly slave girl and holds her in higher esteem than his own wife. The girl begs Aphrodite to make her beautiful, but Aphrodite refuses because of her anger at the girl's master. Discuss how class differences play into Aphrodite's decision.

According to the editor's notes, many of these fables are Egyptian in origin. Discuss the use of non-Greek animals in the fables and how they relate to Egyptian culture.

Discuss the inaccuracies of animal behaviors in fables 203 and 270.

Compare the Aesop described in the introduction to the character of Aesop in fable 19.

The gods of Aesop's fables are portrayed as all powerful; however, they also have human failings. Discuss the human traits of the gods as they relate to fables 108, 110 and 124.

Discuss the roles of women as portrayed in fables 49, 52 and 88.