

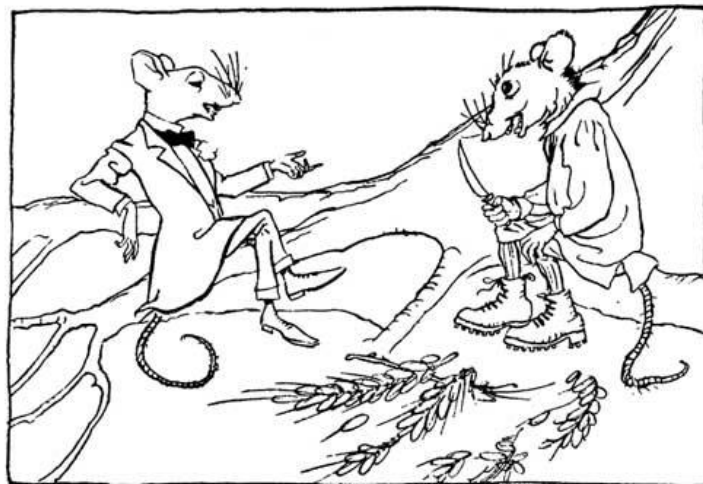
Aesop's Fables

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About the author

Aesop was an Ancient Greek writer who lived in the 6th century BC in Athens, Greece. He wrote over 600 stories called fables. Fables are short stories that teach a moral, or lesson. The characters of fables are usually animals who act and talk like people but still have animal traits. The fables tell a story and end with a moral or lesson.



The Ant and the Grasshopper

One lovely summer day a grasshopper was sitting in the sun singing with all his might. Nearby an ant was struggling along carrying a grain of wheat.

"Isn't it a beautiful day?" sang the grasshopper. "Why don't you sing like me?"

"I'm too busy," muttered the ant as he scurried along.

"What are you too busy about?" asked the grasshopper.

"I'm getting ready for the winter," replied the ant as he put a grain of wheat into his little store hole. Then off he went to fetch some more food.

"Well, I think you're silly," said the grasshopper as the ant returned with another grain. "As long as the sun shines, I shall go on singing."

And so he did. But it wasn't long before autumn came, and then winter. The sun no longer shone and the cold winds blew. The green grass had turned to brown. Soon it became covered with a light dusting of snow. The leaves had fallen from the trees and had blown away. There was nothing to eat. The grasshopper was shivering with cold and was dreadfully hungry.

The ant, however, was snug and warm inside his hole with all the good food he had collected.

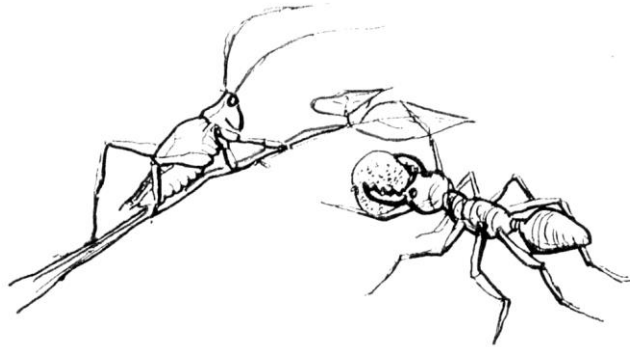
"Please give me some of your food," the grasshopper called down the hole. "I am so hungry."

"No, I can't," said the ant. "I should like to help you, but it has taken me all my time to collect this food and I need it to last me the winter. I have none to spare for anyone else. You should have prepared for the winter as I did."

Ants, like many other creatures, prepare for the future by storing up food. They are wise little creatures because they work hard and think ahead. God says that people should learn a lesson from the ant. People can be prepared for the future by inviting Jesus into their lives. Then, no matter what happens in the future God will be with them. Christians can prepare for the future by storing God's word in their hearts.

Activities: The Ant and the Grasshopper

1. Why did the grasshopper think the ant was silly?
2. How did the grasshopper feel when winter came?
3. Why couldn't the ant give the grasshopper any food?
4. Why could you say that the ant was wise?
5. What is the moral of this story?



The Greedy Dog

Once there was a dog who was given a juicy bone for his dinner. He took the bone and ran off with it, in search of a special hiding place. He wanted to find a place where no other dog would take it.

On his way to the special hiding place he crossed over a bridge. As he was running across the bridge, he caught sight of another dog in the water. He stopped at once. He noticed that the other dog had a bone even bigger than his own! The greedy dog growled at the other dog, dropped his own bone and jumped into the water, thinking that he could grab hold of the other dog's bone.

Splash! Into the water he fell. There was no dog there after all. He had only been looking at his reflection. As for his own bone, it had sunk to the bottom of the river. The greedy dog went home sadly, with no bone at all.

Activities:

1. What kind of bone did the dog have?
2. Why did the dog want to hide his bone?
3. What is a reflection?
4. Who was the other dog in the water?
5. What would you say to the dog at the end of the story?



The Golden Eggs

One day a farmer went to the market to buy a goose. When he went out to his barn the next morning, he found that the goose had laid a golden egg. He called his wife at once. They were both amazed.

"I wonder if the goose will lay another egg tomorrow?" said the farmer's wife.

Sure enough, they found another golden egg the next day, and the next, and the next.

"If we save up all the golden eggs, we will be rich enough to buy whatever we want," said the farmer's wife, "but with only one egg every day it will take too long. Why don't we kill the goose, cut it open and take out all the golden eggs? Then we will be rich at once."

"What a good idea," said the farmer. He killed the goose and cut her open, but sad to say, there were no golden eggs inside. Now all they had was one ordinary dead goose! How sorry they were for being so greedy.

Activities:

1. What would you say to the farmer and his wife at the end of the story?
2. Who said this?
 - a) "If we save up all the golden eggs, we will be rich enough to buy whatever we want."
 - b) "Why don't we kill the goose and take out all the eggs."
 - c) "What a good idea".

3. Complete the sentence:

_____, *but sad to say there were no golden eggs inside.*



A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

The hungry wolf sat and watched a flock of fat sheep. His mouth watered as he thought about the tasty meal, he could get from any one of them. But how could he get in amongst the flock without being noticed by the watchful shepherd?

The wolf sat and thought for a while. He noticed an old sheep skin on the ground, the remains of his last week's meal. That gave him a most brilliant idea. If he were to put the sheep-skin over his own back he would look just like a sheep. Then he could creep in amongst the flock without being noticed and make his kill.

The wolf waited until sunset so that he would not be noticed in the dim light. He crept in and stood in the middle of the flock. His trick seemed to be working. It was now time for the sheep to be herded into the pen for the night. The wolf went along with the sheep.

"Once in the pen," thought the wolf, "I will have my big chance. The shepherd will go to bed for the night and I will have the sheep all to myself."

The shepherd opened the gate of the pen. One by one the sheep went through. However, the old wolf's disguise was not quite good enough to fool the shepherd.

"This is not one of my sheep!" said the shepherd to himself as the wolf passed through the gate. The wolf had his head down and did not see the big knife tucked into the shepherd's belt. As quick as lightning the shepherd lunged toward the wolf and slit his throat.

"You old rogue," he said to himself. "You're still a wolf, whatever you're wearing."

Activities:

1. How is this fable similar to the parable that Jesus told in John 10:1-10?
2. What moral could be attached to this story?

The Goats and the Wolf

Once upon a time there were seven little goats. Sometimes mother goat had to go out and collect juicy thistles and dandelions for her kids. Before she left she would say, "Beware of the big bad wolf. Don't open the door to anyone while I am away. When I return I will say, "Open the door children. It's your mother," and I will show my paw at the window.

One day as mother goat was returning with her basket of thistles and dandelions, the big bad wolf was hiding in the bushes. He watched her show her white paw at the window and say, "Open the door children. It's your mother."

The next time the goat went away, the wolf was prepared. He had dipped his big brown paw in a sack full of flour so that it looked just like the mother goat's white paw. Then he called out in a high voice, just like the mother goat, "Open the door children. It's your mother."

The wolf had tricked the kids. They opened the door and the wolf rushed in. He ate two of the little goats. The wolf was so greedy that he swallowed them whole. The rest of the goats hid under the bed. The wolf couldn't find them so he went to sleep. While he was asleep, mother goat came home. The kids told her what had happened.

Mother goat took the rest of the goats down to the river. They all brought back some heavy stones. While the wolf was still asleep, mother goat took out her sewing basket. She carefully snipped open the wolf's stomach, and took out the kids. They were not hurt at all. Then all the kids filled the wolf's stomach with heavy stones and mother sewed him up again. When the wolf woke up he rushed to the river for a drink, but his stomach was so heavy that he fell in the water and drowned.

Moral: Although something looks real and true, it may very well not be.

Activities:

1. What lesson did the kids learn from this experience?
2. This story could apply to some of the trappings in real life. Give three examples of cases where people get tricked into believing that something is good or true, but in fact it is not.

The Hare and the Tortoise

Once upon a time there was a hare. A hare is like a big rabbit, with very long ears. This hare was very proud of himself because he thought that he was the best runner in the world. He told all the other animals how good he was.

One day, the hare thought he would make fun of the tortoise, who could only walk so slowly. The tortoise became tired of the hare's boasting, so said to the hare, "Why don't we have a race?"

The hare laughed at the idea. "You could never beat me in a race," said the hare.

But they both agreed to have a race to the other side of the valley, and all the animals decided that the fox should go to the finishing line to decide the winner.

The tortoise and the hare started off together, and soon the hare was out of sight, while the tortoise plodded on slowly.

The hare started to think that this race was really a joke. "I'll stop for a rest," he said. "I'll wait here until the tortoise catches up, then I'll race ahead and finish the race before him."

The hare lay down and fell asleep.

After some time, the tortoise came by, slowly and steadily. He just kept going, not stopping for anything. He passed the hare, but the hare did not wake up.

"Slow and steady wins the race," the tortoise kept saying to himself.

The tortoise was almost at the finishing line when the hare woke up. The hare raced to the finishing line but it was too late.

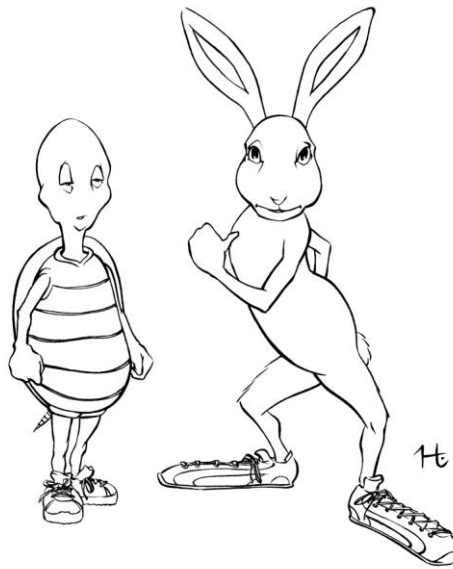
"Tortoise wins the race," cried the fox, and all the animals cheered.

"Slow and steady wins the race," said the tortoise.

"And boasting about the things you can do will not get you anywhere," said the fox.

Activities: The Hare and the Tortoise

1. What is the moral of this story?
2. What was the hare's main problem?
3. What strength of character did the tortoise show?
4. Think of a real-life situation where it is better to go slowly and surely than rush to the finish line.
5. Choose three words to describe the hare.
6. Choose three words to describe the tortoise.



The Lion and the Mouse

A lion was sleeping in his lair when a tiny mouse ran across his nose and woke him up. The lion was very angry for being woken up, and trapped the mouse under his paw, ready to kill him.

“Please, please, Mr. Lion,” said the tiny mouse, “do not kill me, for one day I may be able to help you when you.”

“What! How could a little animal like you help a big animal like me?” laughed the lion.

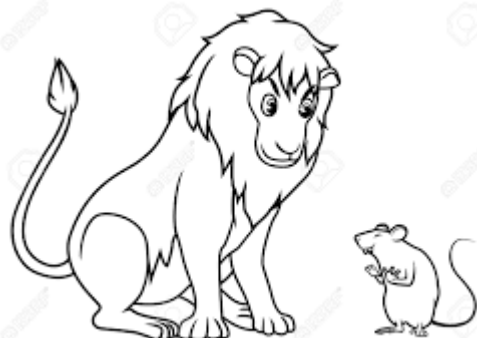
But the lion decided not to kill the mouse, because after all, it was a harmless creature and wouldn’t even make a good meal.

Not long afterwards, the lion was hunting in the woods when he became tangled in a net that had been laid as a trap by some hunters. The lion struggled frantically, roaring with fear. He knew that the hunters would soon return. The little mouse recognised the roar and ran to see what he could do. His sharp teeth soon gnawed a large hole in the net and the lion was freed.

In the end, it was the tiny creature that saved the life of the king of the beasts. Even those who are not so important can do very special jobs to do.

Activities:

1. Why did the lion become angry?
2. Why did the lion decide to let the mouse go?
3. What bad thing happened to the lion?
4. How was the mouse able to help the lion?
5. What does the story show us about those who are not so important?
6. Who do you think was the bravest...the lion, or the mouse? Why?



The City Mouse and the Country Mouse

Once upon a time there was a country mouse who lived a simple, but happy life in the fields. He lived with his family in a hole in the ground, and ate seeds and grasses.

One day, the country mouse decided to invite his cousin, who lived in the city. The country mouse had worked hard to collect lots of delicious food for the city mouse. There were berries, seeds and fruit from the orchard.

The city mouse didn't like the food. In fact he hardly ate anything.

"Cousin," he said, "How can you bear to eat such plain, dull food?" Where I live there is wonderful food that you don't have to work for...sugar treats, bread and cheese, and all kinds of cakes. And where I live there is so much to see...city streets, traffic and city lights. Here there is nothing but grass and trees. Why don't you come to visit me in the city?"

So the two went off to the city together. The country mouse was amazed at the huge houses. Inside the house where his cousin lived there were beautiful things. There were colourful curtains and cushions, chairs and beds. Best of all there was a dining room table with lots of left-over food.

The two mice jumped on the table and began to eat cheese, bread and cake. How delicious! But they had only begun when some people came into the room, laughing and talking.

"Run!" said the city mouse.

The two mice leapt off the table and hid behind a chair. After a while the people left, so the mice jumped back on the table and started eating again. But suddenly a huge cat jumped on to the table, trying to catch the mice with its claws.

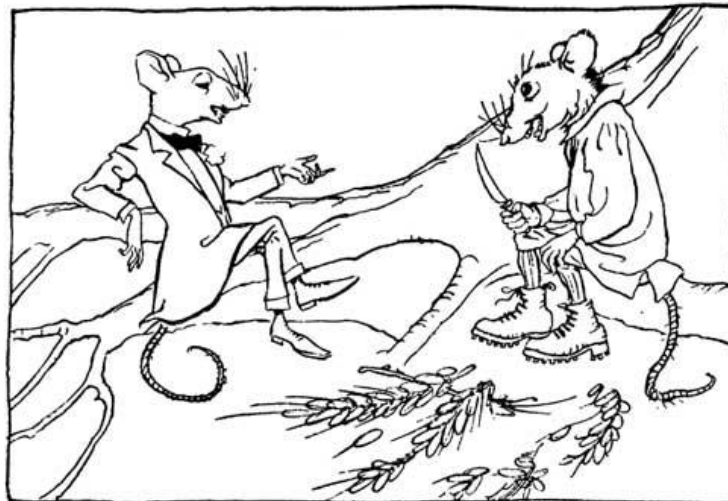
"That's enough for me," said the country mouse. "I'm going back to my peaceful country home where the food may be plain, but I can eat as much as I like in safety!"

Moral: A simple life in peace and safety is preferable to a life of luxury with turmoil and fear.

Activities: The City Town Mouse and the Country Mouse

Sequence the events in this story correctly. Write the numbers in the order that the events occurred.

1. Town mouse went to visit his cousin in the country.
2. "I don't like your food," said Town Mouse. Come back to my place."
3. Town Mouse and Country Mouse went to the city.
4. The mouse family were all asleep.
5. "Let's eat these left-over potato chips and biscuits," said Town Mouse.
6. "I feel sick," said Country Mouse.
7. "Look out. Here comes the cat! Hide behind the cupboard!"
8. Finally the cat fell asleep. "I'm going home," said Country mouse. "Good-bye".



The Sun and the Wind

Once upon a time the wind was boasting about his great strength.

“See how I can bend the strongest trees and see how I can blow the clouds across the sky,” he said to the sun.

The sun replied, “I can melt the snow and make the flowers grow.”

“That’s true,” said the wind, “but I am much more powerful than you. Why don’t we have a contest? See that man walking along the road? Let’s see who can get his cape off.”

“That seems fair to me,” said the sun. “You can try first.”

So the wind blew and blew with all his might. Clouds rolled across the sky and the trees bent over. The man became cold and pulled his cape tightly around him. As the wind blew harder, the man pulled his cape tighter and tighter around him. Finally, the wind gave up and said that the sun could have a turn.

The sun put a smile on his face and shone brightly. The grey clouds disappeared and the air became warm. The man was very pleased. As he walked along, the sun became hotter. Before long the man decided that it was much too hot to wear his cape, so he took it off and tucked it under his arm.

The sun smiled kindly at the wind, and there was never again an argument about who was the strongest.

Moral: Gentleness and kind persuasion win where force and bluster fail.

Activities:

1. What challenge did the Wind present to the Sun?
2. Some people push and shove, and bully others to get what they want. Who would these people represent in the story?
3. Think of a real-life situation where you will have success in getting someone to do something for you by showing kindness.



The Boy who Cried Wolf

Once there was a shepherd boy who looked after sheep on the hill overlooking a village. Each morning he would take the sheep up to the hill to feed, and at night he would take them down to the barn, where they were safe, for wolves prowled at night, looking for something to eat.

After a while, the shepherd boy became bored, so thought he would have a little fun.

“Wolf! Wolf!” he cried in his loudest voice.

At once all the men of the village ran up the hill with their shovels and pitchforks, to try and save the sheep. But when they reached the shepherd, there was no wolf to be seen. The boy rolled on the ground laughing.

“Tricked you, tricked you,” he said.

It was such a good trick that the boy decided to try it again a few days later.

“Wolf! Wolf!” he cried.

Once again the men of the village ran up the hill with their shovels and pitchforks. But once again there was no wolf.

The next week, just as it was getting dark, and it was time to take the sheep down the hill, the boy heard a frightened “Baa!” The boy turned and saw a dark shadow coming towards the sheep. It was a wolf! The boy was very frightened.

The boy cried out, “Wolf! Wolf!” in his loudest voice. But this time no one came. Everyone on the village thought the boy was playing another trick. The boy ran back to the village, but by the time he convinced someone he was telling the truth, the sheep were all gone.

Activities:

1. What is the moral of this story?
2. Make up a story about someone who tried to trick others over and over again, until finally no one took the person seriously any more.

Androcles

Androcles was a young man who lived in Rome about 2000 years ago. In those days many people were treated unkindly. Androcles was one of them. He was a slave to a cruel master.

One day he ran away. He had to be very careful not to be caught by the Roman soldiers who were sent to catch him. After a long journey, through a hot desert, he found a dark cave, crawled into it and fell asleep.

A fierce roar woke him. In the entrance of the cave he saw a huge lion with flashing eyes. Androcles trembled with fear for he knew he could not escape.

However, instead of leaping on him, the lion limped forward in pain, lay down on its side and licked its sore paw. Androcles saw a large thorn sticking into the pad of the lion's paw. He slowly knelt down beside the lion and pulled out the thorn. The lion did not harm Androcles, but quietly walked away.

Androcles hid in the cave for a long time, but one day he went for a walk, too far from his hiding place. Some Roman soldiers caught him. The soldiers recognized him as a run-away slave. They took him to the Emperor, who decided his punishment.

"For your punishment you will have to fight with lions in the big arena," said the Emperor.

When the day came, Androcles was led to a big arena. Crowds watched and cheered, waiting for the event to begin. Then the gate of the lion cages were opened and several lions leapt out. One lion ran towards Androcles and pushed him to the ground. Then it stood over him, as if it was protecting Androcles. It growled and clawed at the other lions when they came near.

This lion was Androcles' old friend – the one who he had helped in the cave. The lion was saying "thankyou" to Androcles for helping him.

The crowd had never seen such a sight. They cheered Androcles and begged the Emperor to set him free. The Emperor gave a hand signal and Androcles was led from the arena, a free man.

Activities: Androcles

1. Why was Androcles running away?
2. Where did he fall asleep?
3. Why didn't the lion attack Androcles?
4. What was Androcles' punishment going to be for running away?
5. What is an arena?
6. Why did the people watching the opening of the cages get a surprise?

7. Copy the following sentences, filling in the missing parts.

1. Androcles had a master.
2. Androcles ran away and found himself in a
3. The lion was blocking the entrance to the
4. The lion had ain his foot.
5. The lion knew that he could..... Androcles.
6. Androcles helped the lion by
7. The lion helped Androcles by
8. One day Androcles and were both captured.
9. The Emperor and the Court officials wanted Androcles to
.....
10. The lion did not hurt Androcles. Instead he
.....
11. The lion was an old friend that
12. The emperor was amazed and set Androcles
13. The lion was taken to where he lived happily.

Belling the Cat

The Mice once called a meeting to decide on a plan to free themselves of their enemy, the Cat. At least they wished to find some way of knowing when she was coming, so they might have time to run away. Indeed, something had to be done, for they lived in such constant fear of her claws that they hardly dared stir from their dens by night or day.

Many plans were discussed, but none of them was thought good enough. At last a very young Mouse got up and said:

"I have a plan that seems very simple, but I know it will be successful.

All we have to do is to hang a bell about the Cat's neck. When we hear the bell ringing, we will know immediately that our enemy is coming."

All the Mice were much surprised that they had not thought of such a plan before. But in the midst of the rejoicing over their good fortune, an old Mouse arose and said:

"I will say that the plan of the young Mouse is very good. But let me ask one question: Who will bell the Cat?"

Moral: It is one thing to say that something should be done, but quite a different matter to do it.

Activities:

1. What was the mice's problem?
2. What solution did the young mouse come up with?
3. How did the old mouse show wisdom?
4. Make up an ending to the following story, along the same lines as "Belling the Cat"...

A Crocodile story

The families in a village in Papua New Guinea were concerned about their children swimming in the river, because there were often crocodiles in the same river. The elders held a meeting to decide how they could protect the swimmers against the crocodiles..... Finish the story.

The Fox and the Crow

A fox once saw a crow fly off with a piece of cheese in its beak. The crow settled on a branch of a tree ready to eat the cheese.

"I want that cheese," said the fox to himself. He walked up to the foot of the tree.

"Good day, Miss Crow," he cried. "How well you are looking today. How glossy your feathers are and how bright your eyes are. I feel sure your voice must be more beautiful than that of any other bird. Let me hear just one song from you."

The crow lifted up her head and began to caw her best, but the moment she opened her mouth the piece of cheese fell to the ground, only to be snapped up by the fox.

"That will do," said he. "That was all I wanted. In exchange for your cheese I will give you a piece of advice for the future: do not be tricked by those who tell you how beautiful you are."

Activities:

1. How was the crow tricked by the fox?
2. What character problem did the crow have?
3. What is the moral of this story?



The Owl and the Grasshopper

The Owl always takes her sleep during the day. Then after sundown, when the rosy light fades from the sky and the shadows rise slowly through the wood, out she comes ruffling and blinking from the old hollow tree. Now her weird "hoo-hoo-hoo-oo-oo" echoes through the quiet wood, and she begins her hunt for the bugs and beetles, frogs and mice she likes so well to eat.

Now there was a certain old Owl who had become very cross and hard to please as she grew older, especially if anything disturbed her daily slumbers. One warm summer afternoon as she dozed away in her den in the old oak tree, a Grasshopper nearby began a joyous but very raspy song. Out popped the old Owl's head from the opening in the tree that served her both for door and for window.

"Get away from here, sir," she said to the Grasshopper. "Have you no manners? You should at least respect my age and leave me to sleep in quiet!"

But the Grasshopper answered proudly that he had as much right to his place in the sun as the Owl had to her place in the old oak. Then he struck up a louder and still more rasping tune.

The wise old Owl knew quite well that it would do no good to argue with the Grasshopper. Besides, her eyes were not sharp enough by day to permit her to punish the Grasshopper as he deserved. So she laid aside all hard words and spoke very kindly to him.

"Well sir," she said, "if I must stay awake, I am going to settle right down to enjoy your singing. Now that I think of it, I have some wonderful wine here. Please come up and taste this delicious drink with me. I know it will make you sing even more beautifully."

The foolish Grasshopper was taken in by the Owl's flattering words. Up he jumped to the Owl's den, but as soon as he was near enough so the old Owl could see him clearly, she pounced upon him and ate him up.

Moral: Do not let flattery throw you off your guard against an enemy.

1. What is flattery?
2. How did the owl trick the grasshopper?

The Wolf and the Crane

A Wolf had been feasting too greedily, and a bone had stuck crosswise in his throat. He could get it neither up nor down, and of course he could not eat a thing. Naturally that was an awful state of affairs for a greedy Wolf.

So away he hurried to the Crane. He was sure that she, with her long neck and bill, would easily be able to reach the bone and pull it out.

"I will reward you greatly" said the Wolf, "if you pull that bone out for me."

The Crane, as you can imagine, was very uneasy about putting her head in a Wolf's throat. But she wanted the reward, so she did what the Wolf asked her to do.

When the Wolf felt that the bone was gone, he started to walk away.

"But what about my reward!" called the Crane anxiously.

"What!" snarled the Wolf, whirling around. "Haven't you got it? Isn't it enough that I let you take your head out of my mouth without snapping it off?"

Moral: Expect no reward for serving the wicked.

Activities:

1. What is a crane?
2. What was the wolf's problem?
3. What did the wolf promise the crane if she helped him?
4. What reward did the wolf think he had given the crane?
5. What does this tell you about the character of the wolf?
6. To be fair, what should the wolf have done?
7. Is the wolf a character that could be trusted?
8. Which people in society would the wolf represent?
9. Many people do not honour their word. If we get to know that a person does not honour their word, what is the best thing to do?