

### **The Four Oxen and the Lion**

**Moral: United we stand, divided we fall.**

**6**

A Lion used to prowl about a field in which Four Oxen used to dwell.

Many a time he tried to attack them; but whenever he came near they turned their tails to one another, so that whichever way he approached them he was met by the horns of one of them.

At last, however, they fell a-quarrelling among themselves, and each went off to pasture alone in a separate corner of the field.

Then the Lion attacked them one by one and soon made an end of all four.

### **The Fox and the Cat**

**Moral: Better one safe way than a hundred on which you cannot reckon.**

**3**

A Fox was boasting to a Cat of its clever devices for escaping its enemies.

*"I have a whole bag of tricks," he said, "which contains a hundred ways of escaping my enemies."*

*"I have only one," said the Cat; "but I can generally manage with that."*

Just at that moment they heard the cry of a pack of hounds coming towards them, and the Cat immediately scampered up a tree and hid herself in the boughs.

*"This is my plan," said the Cat. "What are you going to do?"*

The Fox thought first of one way, then of another, and while he was debating the hounds came nearer and nearer, and at last the Fox in his confusion was caught up by the hounds and soon killed by the huntsmen.

Miss Puss, who had been looking on, said: *"Better one safe way than a hundred on which you cannot reckon"*

### **The Hares and Frogs Fable**

**Moral: There is always someone worse off than yourself.**

**3**

The Hares were so persecuted by the other beasts, they did not know where to go.

As soon as they saw a single animal approach them, off they used to run.

One day they saw a troop of wild Horses stampeding about, and in quite a panic all the Hares scuttled off to a lake hard by, determined to drown themselves rather than live in such a continual state of fear.

But just as they got near the bank of the lake, a troop of Frogs, frightened in their turn by the approach of the Hares scuttled off, and jumped into the water.

*"Truly," said one of the Hares, "things are not so bad as they seem, there is always someone worse off than yourself"*

### **The Lion and the Mouse Fable**

**Moral: Little friends may prove great friends.**

**2**

Once when a Lion was asleep a little Mouse began running up and down upon him; this soon wakened the Lion, who placed his huge paw upon him, and opened his big jaws to swallow him.

*"Pardon, O King,"* cried the little Mouse: *"forgive me this time, I shall never forget it: who knows but what I may be able to do you a turn some of these days?"*

The Lion was so tickled at the idea of the Mouse being able to help him, that he lifted up his paw and let him go.

Some time after the Lion was caught in a trap, and the hunters who desired to carry him alive to the King, tied him to a tree while they went in search of a wagon to carry him on.

Just then the little Mouse happened to pass by, and seeing the sad plight in which the Lion was, went up to him and soon gnawed away the ropes that bound the King of the Beasts.

*"Was I not right?"* said the little Mouse.

### **The Lion, the Fox, and Beasts Fable**

**Moral: It is easier to get into the enemy's toils than out again.**

**5**

The Lion once gave out that he was sick unto death and summoned the animals to come and hear his last Will and Testament.

So the Goat came to the Lion's cave, and stopped there listening for a long time.

Then a Sheep went in, and before she came out a Calf came up to receive the last wishes of the Lord of the Beasts.

But soon the Lion seemed to recover, and came to the mouth of his cave, and saw the Fox, who had been waiting outside for some time.

*"Why do you not come to pay your respects to me?"* said the Lion to the Fox.

*"I beg your Majesty's pardon,"* said the Fox, *"but I noticed the track of the animals that have already come to you; and while I see many hoof-marks going in, I see none coming out. Till the animals that have entered your cave come out again I prefer to remain in the open air."*

### **The Fox and the Crow**

**Moral: Do not trust flatterers.**

**2**

A Fox once saw a Crow fly off with a piece of cheese in its beak and settle on a branch of a tree.

*"That's for me, as I am a Fox,"* said Master Reynard, and he walked up to the foot of the tree.

*"Good-day, Mistress Crow,"* he cried. *"How well you are looking to-day: how glossy your feathers; how bright your eye. I feel sure your voice must surpass that of other birds, just as your figure does; let me hear but one song from you that I may greet you as the Queen of Birds."*

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 Master 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 trust flatterers"*

### **The Fox and the Goat**

**Moral: Never trust the advice of a man in difficulties.**

**2**

By an unlucky chance a Fox fell into a deep well from which he could not get out.

A Goat passed by shortly afterwards, and asked the Fox what he was doing down there.

*"Oh, have you not heard?"* said the Fox; *"there is going to be a great drought, so I jumped down here in order to be sure to have water by me. Why don't you come down too?"*

The Goat thought well of this advice, and jumped down into the well.

But the Fox immediately jumped on her back, and by putting his foot on her long horns managed to jump up to the edge of the well.

*"Good-bye, friend,"* said the Fox, *"remember next time: Never trust the advice of a man in difficulties"*

### **The Tortoise and the Hare**

**Moral: Slow and steady wins the race.**

2

The Hare was once boasting of his speed before the other animals.

*"I have never yet been beaten,"* said he, *"when I put forth my full speed. I challenge anyone here to race with me."*

The Tortoise said quietly, *"I accept your challenge."*

*"That is a good joke,"* said the Hare; *"I could dance round you all the way."*

*"Keep your boasting till you've beaten,"* answered the Tortoise. *"Shall we race?"*

So a course was fixed and a start was made.

The Hare darted almost out of sight at once, but soon stopped and, to show his contempt for the Tortoise, lay down to have a nap.

The Tortoise plodded on and plodded on, and when the Hare awoke from his nap, he saw the Tortoise just near the winning-post and could not run up in time to save the race.

Then said the Tortoise: *"Slow and steady wins the race."*

### **The Horse and the Ass**

**Moral: Better humble security than gilded danger.**

2

A Horse and an Ass were travelling together, the Horse prancing along in its fine trappings, the Ass carrying with difficulty the heavy weight in its panniers.

*"I wish I were you,"* sighed the Ass; *"nothing to do and well fed, and all that fine harness upon you."*

Next day, however, there was a great battle, and the Horse was wounded to death in the final charge of the day.

His friend, the Ass, happened to pass by shortly afterwards and found him on the point of death.

*"I was wrong,"* said the Ass: *"Better humble security than gilded danger"*

## Two Frogs

**Moral: Do nothing without a regard to the consequences.**

2

Two frogs dwelt in the same pool. The pool being dried up under the summer's heat, they left it and set out together for another home.

As they went along they chanced to pass a deep well, amply supplied with water, on seeing which, one of the Frogs said to the other:

*"Let us descend and make our abode in this well."*

The other replied with greater caution:

*"But suppose the water should fail us, how can we get out again from so great a depth?"*

## The Wolf and the Lamb

**Moral: Any excuse will serve a tyrant.**

2

Once upon a time a Wolf was lapping at a spring on a hillside, when, looking up, what should he see but a Lamb just beginning to drink a little lower down.

*"There's my supper,"* thought he, *"if only I can find some excuse to seize it."*

Then he called out to the Lamb, *"How dare you muddle the water from which I am drinking?"*

*"Nay, master, nay,"* said Lambikin; *"if the water be muddy up there, I cannot be the cause of it, for it runs down from you to me."*

*"Well, then,"* said the Wolf, *"why did you call me bad names this time last year?"*

*"That cannot be,"* said the Lamb; *"I am only six months old."*

*"I don't care,"* snarled the Wolf; *"if it was not you it was your father;"* and with that he rushed upon the poor little Lamb and ate her all up.

But before she died she gasped out: *"Any excuse will serve a tyrant."*

### **The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing**

**Moral: Appearances are deceiving.**

**2**

A Wolf found great difficulty in getting at the sheep owing to the vigilance of the shepherd and his dogs.

But one day it found the skin of a sheep that had been flayed and thrown aside, so it put it on over its own pelt and strolled down among the sheep.

The Lamb that belonged to the sheep, whose skin the Wolf was wearing, began to follow the Wolf in the Sheep's clothing; so, leading the Lamb a little apart, he soon made a meal off her, and for some time he succeeded in deceiving the sheep, and enjoying hearty meals.

### **The Ant and the Grasshopper**

**Moral: It is best to prepare for the days of necessity.**

**2**

In a field one summer's day a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart's content. An Ant passed by, bearing along with great toil an ear of corn he was taking to the nest.

*"Why not come and chat with me," said the Grasshopper, "instead of toiling and moiling in that way?"*

*"I am helping to lay up food for the winter," said the Ant, "and recommend you to do the same."*

*"Why bother about winter?" said the Grasshopper; "we have got plenty of food at present."*

But the Ant went on its way and continued its toil.

When the winter came the Grasshopper had no food and found itself dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer.

Then the Grasshopper knew: It is best to prepare for the days of necessity.

## **The Lion and the Boar**

2

**Moral: Those who strive are often watched by others who will take advantage of their defeat to benefit themselves.**

On a summer day, when the great heat induced a general thirst, a Lion and a Boar came at the same moment to a small well to drink.

They fiercely disputed which of them should drink first, and were soon engaged in the agonies of a mortal combat.

On their stopping on a sudden to take breath for the fiercer renewal of the strife, they saw some Vultures waiting in the distance to feast on the one which should fall first.

They at once made up their quarrel, saying:

*"It is better for us to make friends, than to become the food of Crows or Vultures, as will certainly happen if we are disabled."*

## **The Bat, the Birds, and the Beasts**

3

**Moral: He that is neither one thing nor the other has no friends.**

A great conflict was about to come off between the Birds and the Beasts.

When the two armies were collected together the Bat hesitated which to join.

The Birds that passed his perch said:

*"Come with us";* but he said: *"I am a Beast."*

Later on, some Beasts who were passing underneath him looked up and said:

*"Come with us";* but he said: *"I am a Bird."*

Luckily at the last moment peace was made, and no battle took place, so the Bat came to the Birds and wished to join in the rejoicings, but they all turned against him and he had to fly away.

He then went to the Beasts, but soon had to beat a retreat, or else they would have torn him to pieces.

*"Ah,"* said the Bat, *"I see now, He that is neither one thing nor the other has no friends."*

### **Belling the Cat**

3

**Moral: It is easy to propose impossible remedies.**

Long ago, the mice had a general council to consider what measures they could take to outwit their common enemy, the Cat.

Some said this, and some said that; but at last a young mouse got up and said he had a proposal to make, which he thought would meet the case.

*"You will all agree," said he, "that our chief danger consists in the sly and treacherous manner in which the enemy approaches us. Now, if we could receive some signal of her approach, we could easily escape from her. I venture, therefore, to propose that a small bell be procured, and attached by a ribbon round the neck of the Cat. By this means we should always know when she was about, and could easily retire while she was in the neighbourhood."*

This proposal met with general applause, until an old mouse got up and said:

*"That is all very well, but who is to bell the Cat?"*

The mice looked at one another and nobody spoke. Then the old mouse said:

*"It is easy to propose impossible remedies."*

### **The Ass, the Fox, and the Lion**

3

**Moral: Traitors must expect treachery.**

The Ass and the Fox, having entered into a partnership together, went out into the forest to hunt.

They had not proceeded far, when they met a Lion.

The Fox approached the Lion and promised to contrive for him the capture of the Ass, if he would pledge his word that his own life should be spared.

On his assuring him that he would not injure him, the Fox led the Ass to a deep pit, and contrived that he should fall into it.

The Lion, seeing that the Ass was secured, immediately clutched the Fox, and then attacked the Ass at his leisure.

## The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse

2

**Moral: Better beans and bacon in peace than cakes and ale in fear.**

Now you must know that a Town Mouse once upon a time went on a visit to his cousin in the country.

He was rough and ready, this cousin, but he loved his town friend and made him heartily welcome.

Beans and bacon, cheese and bread, were all he had to offer, but he offered them freely.

The Town Mouse rather turned up his long nose at this country fare, and said: *"I cannot understand, Cousin, how you can put up with such poor food as this, but of course you cannot expect anything better in the country; come you with me and I will show you how to live. When you have been in town a week you will wonder how you could ever have stood a country life."*

No sooner said than done: the two mice set off for the town and arrived at the Town Mouse's residence late at night.

*"You will want some refreshment after our long journey,"* said the polite Town Mouse, and took his friend into the grand dining-room.

There they found the remains of a fine feast, and soon the two mice were eating up jellies and cakes and all that was nice.

Suddenly they heard growling and barking.

*"What is that?"* said the Country Mouse.

*"It is only the dogs of the house,"* answered the other.

*"Only!"* said the Country Mouse. *"I do not like that music at my dinner."*

Just at that moment the door flew open, in came two huge mastiffs, and the two mice had to scamper down and run off.

*"Good-bye, Cousin,"* said the Country Mouse, *"What! going so soon?"* said the other.

*"Yes,"* he replied; *"Better beans and bacon in peace than cakes and ale in fear."*