

Androcles

Aesop

A slave named Androcles once escaped from his master and fled to the forest.

As he was wandering about there he came upon a Lion lying down moaning and groaning. At first he turned to flee, but finding that the Lion did not pursue him, he turned back and went up to him.

As he came near, the Lion put out his paw, which was all swollen and bleeding, and Androcles found that a huge thorn had got into it, and was causing all the pain. He pulled out the thorn and bound up the paw of the Lion, who was soon able to rise and lick the hand of Androcles like a dog.

Then the Lion took Androcles to his cave, and every day used to bring him meat from which to live.

But shortly afterwards both Androcles and the Lion were captured, and the slave was sentenced to be thrown to the Lion, after the latter had been kept without food for several days.

The Emperor and all his Court came to see the spectacle, and Androcles was led out into the middle of the arena.

Soon the Lion was let loose from his den and rushed bounding and roaring towards his victim. But as soon as he came near to Androcles he recognized his friend, and fawned upon him, and licked his hands like a friendly dog.

The Emperor, surprised at this, summoned Androcles to him, who told him the whole story. Whereupon the slave was pardoned and freed, and the Lion let loose to his native forest.



The Frog and the Ox

Aesop

“Oh Father,” said a little Frog to the big one sitting by the side of a pool, “I have seen such a terrible monster! It was as big as a mountain, with horns on its head, and a long tail, and it had hoofs divided in two.”

“Tush, child, tush,” said the old Frog, “that was only Farmer White’s Ox. It isn’t so big either; he may be a little bit taller than I, but I could easily make myself quite as broad; just you see.”

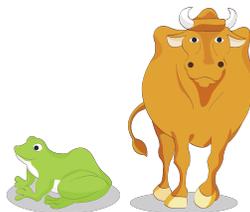
So he blew himself out, and blew himself out. “Was he as big as that?” he asked.

“Oh, much bigger than that,” said the young Frog.

Again the old one blew himself out, and asked the young one if the Ox was as big as that.

“Bigger, father, bigger,” was the reply.

So the Frog took a deep breath, and blew and blew and blew, and swelled and swelled and swelled. And then he said: “I’m sure the Ox is not as big as ...” But at this moment he burst.”



The Hare with Many Friends

Aesop

A Hare was very popular with the other beasts who all claimed to be her friends. But one day she heard the hounds approaching and hoped to escape them by the aid of her many Friends.

So she went to the horse, and asked him to carry her away from the hounds on his back. But he declined, stating that he had important work to do for his master. “He felt sure,” he said, “that all her other friends would come to her assistance.”

She then applied to the bull, and hoped that he would repel the hounds with his horns. The bull replied: “I am very sorry, but I have an appointment with a lady; but I feel sure that our friend the goat will do what you want.”

The goat, however, feared that his back might do her some harm if he took her upon it. The ram, he felt sure, was the proper friend to apply to. So she went to the ram and told him the case.

The ram replied: “Another time, my dear friend. I do not like to interfere on the present occasion, as hounds have been known to eat sheep as well as hares.”

The Hare then applied, as a last hope, to the calf, who regretted that he was unable to help her, as he did not like to take the responsibility upon himself, as so many older persons than himself had declined the task.

By this time the hounds were quite near, and the Hare took to her heels and luckily escaped.”



The Lion and the Mouse

Aesop

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.

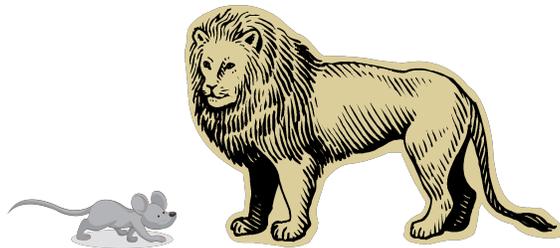
“Pardon, O King,” cried the little Mouse; “forgive me this time, I shall never forget it: who knows but what I may be able to do you a turn some of these days?”

The Lion was so tickled at the idea of the little Mouse being able to help him; 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 Miser and His Gold

Aesop

Once upon a time there was a Miser who used to hide his gold at the foot of a tree in his garden; but every week he used to go and dig it up and gloat over his gains.

A robber, who had noticed this, went and dug up the gold and decamped with it.

When the Miser next came to gloat over his treasures, he found nothing but the empty hole. He tore his hair, and raised such an outcry that all the neighbors came around him, and he told them how he used to come and visit his gold.

“Did you ever take any of it out?” asked one of them.

“Nay,” said he, “I only came to look at it.”

“Then come again and look at the hole,” said a neighbor; “it will do you just as much good”



The Shepherd's Boy

There was once a young Shepherd Boy who tended his sheep at the foot of a mountain near a dark forest. It was rather lonely for him all day, so he thought upon a plan by which he could get a little company and some excitement.

He rushed down towards the village calling out “Wolf, Wolf,” and the villagers came out to meet him, and some of them stopped with him for a considerable time.

This pleased the boy so much that a few days afterwards he tried the same trick, and again the villagers came to his help.

But shortly after this a Wolf actually did come out from the forest, and began to worry the sheep, and the boy of course cried out, “Wolf, Wolf,” still louder than before.

But this time the villagers, who had been fooled twice before, thought the boy was again deceiving them, and nobody stirred to come to his help.

So the Wolf made a good meal off the boy's flock.

