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Aesop's Fables



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VANCOUVER • LONDON



For Emma, Elsie and Emile—MR

For Diego and Pablo—TH

Dog and Wolf

Wolf was hungry and angry. He hadn't eaten for days and he was out on the prowl. It was night and the moon was up. All of a sudden he came on Dog. Dog was sleek and fat and jolly.

"You look well," said Wolf. "How come? Here's me, out hunting all night long and I'm starving. You look like you feed your face all hours of the day and night."

"Listen Wolf," said Dog, "You could eat like me if you did what I do."

"What do you do?" asked Wolf.

"I guard a house," said Dog. "I stop thieves and burglars from getting in."

"That's easy," said Wolf. "So if I do what you say, I get to eat like you do? Gobble, gobble, gobble, day and night?"

"That's it," said Dog.

"Right," said Wolf, "Count me in. I'll join you."

Just then, Wolf noticed something round Dog's neck.

"What's that?" asked Wolf.

"Oh, nothing much," said Dog.

"No, really," said Wolf, "what is it?"

"Oh, it's just a little thing my master gave me."

"But what's it for?" asked Wolf.

"It's a collar. My master ties a chain to it and then he ties the chain to a post," said Dog.

"Why does he do that?" asked Wolf.

"So I don't run away."

Wolf thought hard and deep. "Keep your food and your job. I know I'm hungry but I'd rather be free than be a well-fed slave."



MORAL *There's nothing more important than freedom. Even if you're promised a full belly, it shouldn't make you give up your freedom. Being a slave is worse than being hungry.*





Fox and Grapes

Fox could smell some delicious, sweet grapes. There they were, bulging and dark, nestling among the leaves. Fox could just imagine them bursting in his mouth, ripe and cool and juicy.

He trotted over to the plant and got ready to sink his teeth into the whole bunch. Up he went on his hind legs, up a bit more, up one little bit more . . . but, no, try as he might, he couldn't quite reach. He jumped, he hopped, he skipped, but it was no good. The beautiful grapes went on hanging there, just a little bit too high.

So Fox gave up and trotted off, saying to himself, 'Yeah, well, they were probably sour anyway.'



MORAL *Don't fool yourself into saying that something is bad, when really you know it's good. You're probably only saying it because you can't have it.*

Crow and Fox

Crow found some cheese on a window sill, grabbed it in his beak, and flew up into his tree. Along came Fox who started up with his usual smooth talk.

“Oh wow! You are just about the most beautiful bird I have seen round here in years. I’m telling you, there can’t be another bird as lovely as you—your colours, your shape, your personality. Look, believe me, you are one terrific bird. Do you know something? If you could sing like you look, you would definitely be the most seriously attractive bird ever . . . anywhere!”

Crow had never heard anything like this. He was so pleased and proud and full of himself.

‘Me? Seriously attractive! That really is something,’ he thought. ‘Of course I can sing. Everyone knows crows have beautiful voices and mine is truly terrific.’

He made his chest swell out, took in a breath, opened his beak and—whoops! Out fell the cheese, down on to the ground.

Fox pounced on it, snapped his jaws round it and swallowed it quicker than a blink.



MORAL *Don't get carried away when people tell you that you're brilliant or beautiful. They may be saying it just so they can get something from you.*

