The Morals of Aesop’s Fables

A bird in the hand is better than two in the bush.
A bribe in the hand shows mischief in the heart.
A false tale often betrays itself.
A fine appearance is a poor substitute for inward worth.
A humble life with peace and quiet is better than a splendid one with danger and risk.
A man is known by the company he keeps.
A villain may disguise himself, but he will not deceive the wise.
A willful beast must go his own way
A willful man will have his way to his own hurt.
A word in season is most precious.
Abstain and enjoy.
Acquaintance softens prejudices.
An act of kindness is a good investment.
Attempt not impossibilities.
Avoid a remedy that is worse than the disease.
Be on guard against men who can strike from a distance.
Be reasonable in your criticism.
Be sure that there are others worse off than yourself.
Beauty is only skin-deep.
Benefits bestowed upon the evil-disposed increase their means of injuring you.
Better a certain enemy than a doubtful friend.
Better poverty without care, than riches with.
Beware of flatterers.
Beware of hypocrites.
Beware of the counsel of the unfortunate.
Beware of flatterers.
Birds of a feather flock together.
Change of habit cannot alter Nature.
Children are not to be blamed for the faults of their parents.
Choose the lesser of two evils.
Clothes do not make the man.
Contentment with our lot is an element of happiness.
Counsel without help is useless.
Count the cost before you commit yourselves.
Do not attempt to hide things which cannot be hid.
Do not attempt too much at once.
Do not be in a hurry to change one evil for another.
Do not count your chickens before they are hatched.
Do not enter into danger for the profit of others.
Do not lay claim to a virtue you do not possess if you would keep the respect of your friends.
Do not try to do that which is not natural to you.
Do not waste your pity on a scamp.
Do nothing without a regard to the consequences.
Don’t make much ado about nothing.
The Morals of Aesop’s Fables

Equals make the best friends.
Even the wise must recognize their limits.
Every man for himself.
Every man should be content to mind his own business.
Every tale is not to be believed.
Everyone is more or less master of his own fate.
Evil companions bring more hurt than profit.
Evil tendencies are shown in early life.
Evil wishes, like chickens, come home to roost.
Example is more powerful than precept.
Faithful service should long be remembered.
False confidence often leads into danger.
Figures are not always facts.
Fine feather friends are not worth much.
Fine feathers do not make fine birds.
Force is not a remedy.
Harm hatch, harm catch.
Harm seek, harm find.
He is not to be trusted as a friend who mistreats his own family.
He is wise who is warned by the misfortunes of others.
He who despises a humble friend may be doing an ill turn to himself.
He who grasps at the shadow may lose the substance.
He who shares the danger ought to share the prize.
He who tries to please everybody pleases nobody.
Hypocritical speeches are easily seen through.
If men had all they wished, they would be often ruined.
If words suffice not, blows must follow.
In a change of government the poor change nothing beyond the name of their master.
In avoiding one evil, care must be taken not to fall into another.
In quarreling about the shadow we often lose the substance.
In serving the wicked, expect no reward, and be thankful if you escape injury for your pains.
It is a mean nature which affects to dislike that which it is unable to obtain. (Sour grapes)
It is absurd to ape our betters.
It is an aspect of all happiness to suppose that we deserve it.
It is better to bend than to break.
It is dangerous to speak the truth to tyrants.
It is easier to make a suggestion than to carry it out.
It is easy to kick a man that is down.
It is not always wise to take people at their word.
It is too late to prepare for danger when our enemies...
The Morals of Aesop’s Fables

are upon us.

It is useless to expect our prayers to be heard if we do not strive as well as pray.

It matters little if those who are inferior to us in merit should be like us in outside appearances.

It shows an evil disposition to take advantage of a friend in distress.

It sometimes happens that one man has all the toil, and another all the profit.

Kindness is better bestowed on the living than on the dead.

Lessons are not given, they are taken.

Let well alone.

Like will draw like.

Little liberties are great offenses.

Live and let live.

Look before you leap.

Man is what he believes.


Men may be ruined by attempting to appear that which Nature has not intended them to be.

Men of evil reputation, when they perform a good deed, fail to get credit for it.

Men often bear little grievances with less courage than they do large misfortunes.

Might makes right.

Misfortune tests the sincerity of friends.

Misfortune will surely befall him who loves unwisely.

Misfortunes springing from ourselves are the hardest to bear.

Misfortunes we bring upon ourselves are doubly bitter.

Nature exceeds nurture.

Nature never breaks her own laws.

Necessity is the mother of invention.

Necessity knows no law.

No arguments will give courage to the coward.

No bird soars too high if he soars with his own wings.

No one can be a friend if you know not whether to trust or distrust him.

No one truly forgets injuries in the presence of him who caused the injury.

Nothing escapes the master’s eye.

Notoriety is often mistaken for fame.

Of what use is it to pretend there is a choice when there is none?

Old birds are not to be caught with chaff.

Old friends cannot with impunity be sacrificed for new ones.

Once bitten, twice shy.
The Morals of Aesop’s Fables

One cannot be first in everything.

One good turn deserves another.

One man’s meat is another man’s poison.

One story is good, till another is told.

One swallow does not make summer.

Our mere anticipations of life outrun its realities.

People who wrangle and fight give opportunities to their enemies.

Persuasion is better than force.

Physicians should first heal themselves.

Pleasure bought with pains, hurts.

Pride goes before destruction.

Revenge is a two-edged sword.

Revenge is dearly bought at the price of liberty.

Self-help is the best help.

Self-interest alone moves some men.

Silly people despise what is precious because they cannot understand it.

Slavery is too high a price to pay for easy living.

Slow but steady wins the race.

Some men are of more consequence in their own eyes than in the eyes of their neighbors.

Some men underrate their best blessings.

Some will always find fault with the things that benefit them.

Spare the rod and spoil the child.

Stoop to conquer.

Straws show how the wind blows.

Swan song

The advise of an enemy is not to be trusted.

The battle is not always won by the strong.

The best intentions will not always ensure success.

The cold-blooded possess a poisonous bite.

The covetous are poor givers.

The desire for imaginary benefits often involves the loss of present blessings.

The dishonest, if they act honestly, get no credit.

The flower in the vase smiles, but it can no longer laugh.

The greatest kindness will not bind the ungrateful.

The greedy never know when they have had enough.

The hero is brave in deeds as well as words.

The least outlay is not always the greatest gain.

The loiterer often blames delay on his more active friend.

The memory of a good deed lives.

The more honor the more danger.

The remedy may be as bad as the disease.

The safeguards of virtue are hateful to those with evil intentions.
The Morals of Aesop’s Fables

The simple are easily deceived.
The tyrant will always find a pretext for his tyranny.
The value is in the worth, not in the number.
The want of a good excuse never kept a villain from crime.
The wicked often fall into their own snares.
The wise man does at once what the fool does finally.
There are two sides to every truth.
There is more danger from a pretended friend than from an open enemy.
There is no believing a liar, even when he speaks the truth.
They are not wise who give to themselves the credit due to others.
They who act without sufficient thought, will often fall into unsuspected danger.
They who lay traps for others are often caught by their own bait.
They who live by robbery cannot call other men thieves.
Think before you act.
Those who assume a character which does not belong to them, only make themselves ridiculous.
Those who betray their friends must not expect others to keep faith with them.
Those who cause evil are the first to be overwhelmed by its ruin.
Those who enter by the back stairs may expect to be shown out at the window.
Those who lead an idle life are apt to scorn the honest and diligent, but their life is often miserable.
Those who love practical jokes must be prepared to laugh when one is made at their expense.
Those who seek to please everybody please nobody.
Those who suffer most cry out the least.
Those who, out of vanity, attempt more than they can perform are certain to bring ridicule upon themselves.
Time and place often give the advantage to the weak over the strong.
To know the world one must construct it.
Too much cunning over-reaches itself.
Try before you trust.
Two blacks do not make one white.
Union is strength.
Use is better than ornament.
Use serves to overcome dread.
War can protect. It cannot create.
We had better bear our troubles bravely than try to escape them.
We must make friends in prosperity if we would have
The Morals of Aesop’s Fables

their help in adversity.

We should never lose a grand opportunity.

What is most truly valuable is often underrated.

Whatever you do, do with all your might.

What's bred in the bone will stick to the flesh.

When the rich surrender the rights of the poor they endanger their own privileges.

Wise men keep a guard on their tongues.

You can play a good card game once too often.

You cannot escape your fate.

Youth’s first duty is reverence to parents.

Zeal should not outrun discretion.