

Fables

An Oak Meadow Collection



Oak Meadow

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The Little Red Hen

*You can't have your cake
and eat it too.*



The little red hen was in the farmyard with her chicks. She found a grain of wheat.

“Who will plant this wheat?” she asked.

“Not I,” said the goose.

“Not I,” said the duck.

“Then I will,” said the little red hen, and she planted the grain of wheat.

When the wheat was ripe, she asked, “Who will take this wheat to the mill?”

“Not I,” said the goose.

“Not I,” said the duck.

“Then I will,” said the little red hen, and she took the wheat to the mill.

When she brought the flour home, she asked, “Who will make some bread with this flour?”

“Not I,” said the goose.

“Not I,” said the duck.

“Then I will,” said the little red hen.

When the bread was baked, she asked, "Who will eat this bread?"

"I will!" said the goose.

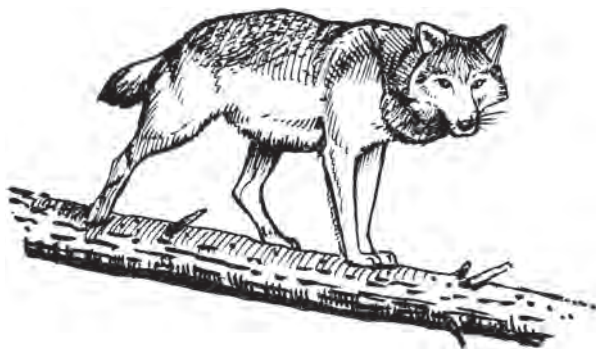
"I will!" said the duck.

"No, you will not," said the little red hen. "I shall eat it myself. Cluck! Cluck!" And she called her little chicks to help her.



The Boy Who Cried Wolf

Those who lie may not be believed when they tell the truth.



There once was a shepherd boy who kept his flock of sheep in a field a little distance away from the village. It was very quiet in the field with only the sheep for company. The boy was very bored, so one day

he decided to play a trick on the villagers and have some fun at their expense.

He ran toward the village crying out with all his might, “Wolf! Wolf! Come and help! A wolf is attacking my sheep!”

The kind villagers left their work and their homes and ran to the field to help him. But when they got there, the boy only laughed at them for their trouble. There was no wolf.

The next week, the boy was thinking about how funny it was when all the villagers came running. He decided to do it again.

He ran toward the village yelling, “Wolves! Wolves! Help! Come quick! Wolves are attacking my sheep!”

The villagers left their work and their homes and came running to help. But there were no wolves, and they only got laughed at again.

The following week, a big gray wolf snuck into the shepherd's field and attacked a sheep. The wolf held the sheep by the neck and began to drag it away. The other sheep were bleating and running in all directions as several more wolves ran toward the flock.

In great fright, the boy ran to the village for help.

“Wolf! Wolf!” he screamed.
“There is a wolf killing my sheep! Help!”

The villagers heard him, but they just shook their heads, thinking it was another mean trick.

“Please,” the boy cried. “Come quick! The wolves are stealing my flock!”

But no one paid the least bit of attention to the boy. They did not believe him. And the shepherd boy lost all his sheep.



The Sun and the Wind

More can be done with gentleness than with force.

Sun and Wind were having a disagreement. Each believed itself to be more powerful than the other. While they were arguing, they saw a traveler wearing a great cloak walking along the country road.

“Here is a chance to see who is more powerful,” said Wind. “Let us see which of us can make that traveler take off his cloak. The one who can do that shall be acknowledged to be the more powerful.”

“Agreed,” said Sun. “You may try first.” And Sun hid behind a cloud to watch.

Instantly Wind began to blow. Wind puffed and tugged at the man’s cloak, and raised blustery gusts of air to beat at the traveler. The more Wind blew and whipped and howled, the cooler it became and the tighter the traveler held his cloak around him.

Wind could not get it off.

Now it was Sun’s turn. It came out from behind the cloud and shined all its gentle warmth and light on the man’s shoulders. As it grew warmer, the man unfastened his cloak. Sun beamed its golden glow, and soon the traveler threw back the cloak and took it off.

Sun had won!

Wind said, “Sun, you have accomplished with gentleness what I could not do with strength. You are the most powerful.”





The Talkative Tortoise

*It is a very good thing
to know when to speak and when
to keep your mouth closed.*

Once upon a time, a tortoise lived in a pond with two ducks who were her very good friends. Tortoise enjoyed the company of the ducks because she could talk with them to her heart's content. Tortoise liked to talk. She always had something to say, and she liked to hear herself say it.

After many years of this pleasant living, the pond became

very low during a dry season. Finally, it dried up.

The two ducks saw that they could no longer live there, so they decided to fly to another region where there was more water. They went to the tortoise to bid her goodbye.

“Oh, don’t leave me behind!” begged Tortoise. “Take me with you. I will die if I am left here.”

“But you cannot fly!” said the ducks. “How can we take you with us?”

“Take me with you! Please, take me with you!” pleaded Tortoise.

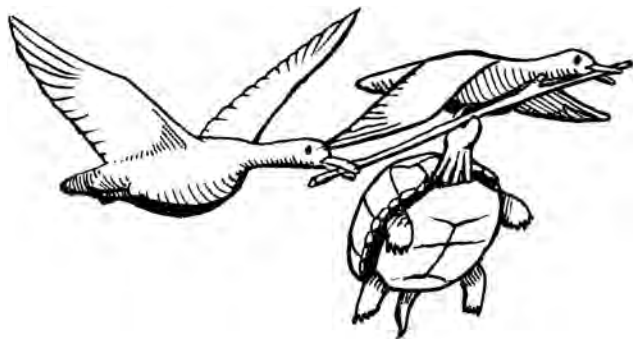
The ducks felt so sorry for her that at last they thought of a way to take her.

“We have thought of a way,”

they said, “but it is only possible if you can manage to keep your mouth closed long enough. We will each take hold of one end of a sturdy stick, and you take the middle of the stick in your mouth. Then we will fly up in the air with you and carry you with us. But remember not to talk! If you open your mouth, you are lost.”

Tortoise said she was very grateful and she would not say a word. She would not so much as move her mouth.

The ducks brought a strong little stick and took hold of the ends, while Tortoise bit firmly on the middle. Then the two ducks rose slowly in the air and flew away with their burden.



When they were above the treetops, Tortoise wanted to say, “How high we are!” But she remembered and kept quiet.

When they passed the church steeple, she wanted to say, “What is that which shines?” But she remembered and held her mouth closed.

Then they flew over the village square, and the people looked up and saw them.

“Look at the ducks carrying a tortoise!” they shouted.

Everyone ran to look.

Tortoise wanted to say, “What business is it of yours?” But she didn’t.

Then the people shouted, “Isn’t it strange! Look at it! Look!”

Tortoise forgot everything except that she wanted to say, “Hush, you foolish people!”

She opened her mouth and fell down, down, down to the ground. And that was the end of the tortoise.