



Fables & Folklore – Grades 2-4

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The Baboon's Umbrella

Arnold Lobel

Advice from others can be like the weather. Some of it is good; some of it is bad.

The Baboon was taking his daily walk in the jungle. He met his friend, the Gibbon, on the path.

“My good friend,” said the Gibbon, “how strange to find you holding an open umbrella over your head on such a sunshiny day as this.”

“Yes,” said the Baboon. “I am most annoyed. I cannot close this disagreeable umbrella. It is stuck. I would not think of walking without my umbrella in case it should rain. But, as you see, I am not able to enjoy the sunshine underneath this dark shadow. It is a sad predicament.”

“There is a simple solution,” said the Gibbon. “You need only to cut some holes in your umbrella. Then the sun will shine on you.”

“What a good idea!” cried the Baboon. “I do thank you.”

The Baboon ran home. With his scissors, he cut large holes in the top of his umbrella. When the Baboon returned to his walk, the warm sunshine came down

through the holes. “How delightful!” said the Baboon.

However, the sun disappeared behind some clouds. There were a few drops of rain. Then it began to pour. The rain fell through all of the holes in the umbrella. In just a short time, the unhappy Baboon was soaked to the skin. **j**

The Bad Kangaroo

Arnold Lobel

A child's conduct will reflect the ways of his parents.

There was a small Kangaroo who was bad in school. He put thumbtacks on the teacher's chair. He threw spitball across the classroom. He set off firecrackers in the lavatory and spread glue on the doorknobs.

"Your behavior is impossible!" said the school principal. "I am going to see your parents. I will tell them what a problem you are!"

The principal went to visit Mr. and Mrs. Kangaroo. He sat down in a living-room chair. "Ouch!" cried the principal. "There is a thumbtack in this chair!"

"Yes, I know," said Mr. Kangaroo. "I enjoy putting thumbtacks in chairs."

A spitball hit the principal on his nose. "Forgive me," said Mrs. Kangaroo, "but I can never resist throwing those things."

There was a loud booming sound in the bathroom. "Keep calm," said Mr. Kangaroo to the principal. "The firecrackers that we keep in the medicine chest have just exploded. We love the noise."

The principal rushed for the front door. In an instant he was stuck to the doorknob. "Pull hard," said

Mrs. Kangaroo. "There are little globs of glue on all of our doorknobs."

The principal pulled himself free. He dashed out of the house and ran off down the street. "Such a nice person," said Mr. Kangaroo. "I wonder why he left so quickly."

"No doubt he had another appointment," said Mrs. Kangaroo. "Never mind, supper is ready."

Mr. and Mrs. Kangaroo and their son enjoyed their evening meal. After the dessert, they all threw spitballs at each other across the dining-room table.

J

Belling the Cat

From A Beka Reading Series

Improving your lot is hard work indeed.

Some little mice, who lived in the walls of a house, met together one night to talk of the wicked cat, and to consider what could be done to get rid of her. The head mice were Brown-back, Grey-ear, and White-whisker.

“There is no comfort in the house,” said Brown-back. “If I but step into the pantry to pick up a few crumbs, down she comes, and I hardly have time to run to my nest again.”

“What can we do?” asked Grey-ear. “Shall we all run at her at once and bite her and frighten her away?”

“No,” said White-whisker. “She is so bold we could not frighten her. I have thought of something better than that. Let us hang a bell around her neck. Then, if she moves, the bell will ring, and we shall hear it and have time to run away.”

“O yes! yes!” cried all the mice. “That is a wonderful idea. We will bell the cat! Hurrah! Hurrah! No more fear of the cat!” And they danced in glee.

When they were quiet again, Brown-back asked, “But who will hang the bell around her neck?” No one answered. “Will you?” he asked White-whisker.

“I don’t think I can,” replied White-whisker. “I am lame, you know. It needs someone who can move quickly.”

“Will you, Grey-ear?” said Brown-back.

“Excuse me,” answered Grey-ear. “I have not been well since that time when I was almost caught in the trap.”

“Who will bell the cat, then?” said Brown-back. “If it is to be done, someone must do it.”

Not a sound was heard, and one by one the little mice stole away to their holes, no better off than they were before. ¶

The Boy and the Nuts

Aesop

One good, practical reason for controlling our cravings is that if we grasp for too much, we may end up getting nothing at all.

A little boy once found a jar of nuts on the table.

“I would like some of these nuts,” he thought. “I’m sure Mother would give them to me if she were here. I’ll take a big handful.” So he reached into the jar and grabbed as many as he could hold.

But when he tried to pull his hand out, he found that the neck of the jar was too small. His hand was held fast, but he did not want to drop any of the nuts.

He tried again and again, but he couldn’t get the whole handful out. At

last he began to cry. Just then his mother came into the room. “What’s

the matter?” she asked.

“I can’t take this handful of nuts out of the jar,” sobbed the boy.

“Well, don’t be greedy,” his mother replied. “Just take two or three, and you’ll have no trouble getting your hand out.”

“How easy that was,” said the boy as he left the table. “I should have thought of that myself.” ¶

The Crows are in the Corn

A Georgia folktale explaining an old

saying retold by S. E. Schlosser

It happened in Georgia not long ago, that a farmer and his wife decided to sleep late, like the rich folk do. It was a beautiful Saturday morning, the kind that brings all God's creatures out to play. But not these farm folk. No, they just slept and slept and slept.

The crows were gathered in a large oak tree, having a big morning meeting. They noticed that there was nobody stirring around the house, and that the corn was ripe in the field. So they adjourned their meeting mighty quick and flew over to the field to eat some corn.

"Caw-n, caw-n," they cackled excitedly.

The old rooster woke up to their activities and started to crow excitedly to the sleeping family. "Wake up, wake up, wake up!"

The farmer and his wife just kept sleeping, and the crows

kept eating the corn. "Caw-n, caw-n," they called.

"The crows are in the corn! The crows are in the corn!" The rooster cock-a-doodle-dooded with all his might.

The farmer kept snoring, and his wife just rolled over and pulled the pillow over her head.

The rooster was frantic. He tried once more: "The crows are in the corn. They're pulling up the corn!" The farmer and his wife kept right on sleeping. And the crow's kept right on eating.

The rooster quit crowing in disgust. Nothing would wake the farmer and his wife.

The old turkey came strolling into the yard and watched the proceedings. Finally he said to the rooster: "The corns all et up, all et up, all et up."

When the farmer and his wife finally rolled out of bed, they found that the corn was all gone. That is why in Georgia they say "the crows are in the corn" when it is time to get up. **J**

The Ducks and the Fox

At times, a change of routine can be most healthful.

Arnold Lobel

Two Duck sisters were waddling down the road to the pond for their morning swim.

"This is a good road," said the first sister, "but I think, just for a change, we should find another route. There are many other roads that lead to the pond."

"No," said the second sister, "I do not agree. I really do not want to try a new way. This road makes me feel comfortable. I am accustomed to it."

One morning the Ducks met a Fox sitting on a fence along the road.

"Good morning, ladies," said the Fox. "On your way to the

pond, I suppose?" Oh, yes," said the sisters, "we come along

here every day."

"Interesting," said the Fox with a toothy smile.

When the sun came up the next morning, the first sister said, "We are sure to meet that Fox again if we go our usual way. I did not like his looks. Today is the day that we must find another road!"

"You are being just plain silly," said the second sister. "That Fox smiled at us. He seemed most gentlemanly."

The two Ducks waddled down the same road to the pond. There was the Fox, sitting on the fence. This time he carried a sack.

"Lovely ladies," said the Fox, "I was expecting you. I am glad that you have

not disappointed me." Opening his sack, he jumped upon them.

The sisters quacked and screamed. They flapped and flopped their wings. They flew home and bolted their door.

The next morning, the two Ducks did not go out. They rested at home to quiet their nerves. On the following day they carefully searched for a new and different road. They found one, and it took them safely to the pond. **J**

The Fox and the Crow

Aesop

Vanity is largely a matter of self-control, or lack of it. Others may try to feed our ego, but it is up to us to control it.

A coal-black crow once stole a piece of meat. She flew to a tree and held the meat in her beak. A fox, who saw her, wanted the meat for himself, so he looked up into the tree and said, "How beautiful you are, my friend! Your feathers are fairer than the dove's."

"Is your voice as sweet as your form is beautiful? If so you must be the queen of birds."

The crow was so happy in his praise that she opened her mouth to show how she could sing. Down fell the piece of meat.

The fox seized upon it and ran away. ¶

George Washington and the Cherry Tree

Adapted from J. Berg Esenwein and Marietta Stockard

This story is the most famous truth-telling tale in America.

When George Washington was a little boy, he lived on a farm in Virginia. His father taught him to ride, and would take young George about the farm with him so that his son might learn how to take care of the fields and horses and cattle when he grew older.

Mr. Washington had planted an orchard of fine fruit trees. There were trees of apple, peach, pear, plum, and cherry. Once, a particularly fine cherry tree was sent to him from across the ocean. Mr. Washington planted it on the edge of the orchard. Everyone on the farm was to watch it carefully to see that it was not hurt in any way.

It grew well, and one spring it was covered with white blossoms. Mr. Washington was pleased to think he would soon have cherries from the little tree.

Just about this time, George was given a shiny new hatchet. He took it and went about chopping sticks, hacking into the rails of fences, and cutting whatever else he passed. At last he came to the edge of the orchard, and thinking only how well his hatchet could cut, he chopped into the little cherry tree. The bark was soft, and it cut so easily that George chopped the tree right down, and then went on with his play.

That evening after Mr. Washington came in from inspecting the farm, he decided to walk down to the orchard to look at his cherry tree. He stood in amazement when he saw it. "Who would have dared do such a thing?" he asked everyone, but no one could tell him anything about it.

Just then George passed by.

"George," his father called in an angry voice, "do you know who killed my cherry tree?"

This was a tough question, and George staggered under it for a moment, but quickly recovered. "I cannot tell a lie, father," he said. "I did it with my hatchet."

Mr. Washington looked at George whose face was white, but he looked straight into his father's eyes. "Go into the house, son," said Mr. Washington sternly –

George went into the library and waited for his father. He had been so foolish and now he felt ashamed. His father was right to be displeased.

Soon, Mr. Washington came into the room. "Come here, my boy," he said. George went over to his father. Mr. Washington looked at him long and steadily.

"Tell me, son, why did you cut the tree?"

"I was playing, and I did not think ..." he stammered.

"And now the tree is dead. We shall never have any cherries from it. But worse than that, you have failed to take care of the tree when I asked you to do so."

George's head was bent, and his cheeks were red from shame. "I am sorry, father," he said.

Mr. Washington put his hand on the boy's shoulder. "Look at me," he said. "I am sorry to have lost the cherry tree, but I am glad that you were brave enough to tell me the truth."

And to the end of his life, George Washington was just as brave and honorable as he was that day as a little boy. ¶

The Goose That Laid the Golden Eggs

Aesop

p

This classic fable is about plenty not being enough; when "having it all" becomes the motto of the day.

A man and his wife had the good fortune to possess a goose that laid a golden egg every day. Lucky though they were, they soon began to think they were not getting rich fast enough, and imagining the bird must be made of gold inside, they decided to kill it in order to secure the whole store of precious metal at once. But when they cut it open, they found it was just like any other goose. Thus, they neither got rich all at once, as they had hoped, nor continued to enjoy the daily addition to their wealth.

Much wants more and loses
all. ¶

The Hen and the Apple Tree

Arnold Lobel

It is always difficult to pose as something that one is not.

One October day, a Hen looked out her window. She saw an apple tree growing in her backyard. "Now that is odd," said the Hen. "I am certain that there was no tree standing in that spot yesterday." The tree said, "There are some of us that grow fast."

The Hen looked at the bottom of the tree.

"I have never seen a tree," she said, "that has ten furry toes."

"There are some of us that do," said the tree. "Hen, come outside and enjoy the cool shade of my leafy branches."

The Hen looked at the top of the tree.

"I have never seen a tree," she said, "that has two long, pointed ears."

"There are some of us that have," said the tree. "Hen, come outside and eat one of my delicious apples."

"Come to think of it," said the Hen, "I have never heard a tree speak from a mouth that is full of sharp teeth."

"There are some of us that can," said the tree. "Hen, come outside and rest your back against the bark of my trunk."

"I have heard," said the Hen, "that some of you trees lose all of your leaves at this time of the year." "Oh, yes," said the tree, "there are some of us that will."

The tree began to quiver and shake. All of its leaves quickly dropped off.

The Hen was not surprised to see a large Wolf in the place where an apple tree had been standing just a moment before. She locked her shutters and slammed her window closed.

The Wolf knew that he had been outsmarted, and he stormed away in a hungry rage. **J**

The Hippopotamus at Dinner

Arnold Lobel

Too much of anything often leaves one with a feeling of regret.

The Hippopotamus went into a restaurant and sat at his favorite table.

“Waiter!” called the Hippopotamus. “I will have the bean soup, the Brussels sprouts, and the mashed potatoes. Please hurry, I am enormously hungry tonight!”

In a short while, the waiter returned with the order. The Hippopotamus glared down at his plate. “Waiter,” he said, “do you call this a meal? These portions are much too small. They would not satisfy a bird. I want a *bathtub* of bean soup, a *bucket* of Brussels sprouts, and a *mountain* of mashed potatoes. I tell you, I have an APPETITE!”

The waiter went back into the kitchen. He returned carrying enough bean soup to fill a bathtub, enough Brussels sprouts to fill a bucket, and a mountain of mashed potatoes. In no time, the Hippopotamus had eaten every last morsel.

“Delicious!” said the Hippopotamus, as he dabbed his mouth with a napkin and prepared to leave. To his surprise, he could not move. His stomach, which had grown considerably larger, was caught between the table and the chair. He pulled and tugged, but it was no use. He could not budge. The hour grew late. The other customers in the restaurant finished their dinners and left. The cooks took off their aprons and put away their pots. The waiters cleared the dishes and turned out the lights. They all went home.

The Hippopotamus remained there, sitting forlornly at the table.

“Perhaps I should not have eaten quite so many Brussels sprouts,” he said, as he gazed into the gloom of the darkened restaurant. Occasionally, he burped. ¶

The Honest Woodman

Adapted from Emilie Poulsson

This story is retold from a poem by Jean de La Fontaine, who, like Aesop, was a master of the fable.

Once upon a time, out in the green, silent woods near a rushing river that foamed and sparkled as it hurried along, there lived a poor woodcutter who worked hard to make a living for his family. Every day he would trudge into the forest with his strong, sharp ax over his shoulder. He always whistled happily as he went, because he was thinking that as long as he had his health and his ax, he could earn enough to buy all the bread his family needed.

One day he was cutting a large oak tree near the riverside. The chips flew fast at every stroke, and the sound of the ringing ax echoed through the forest so clearly you might have thought a dozen wood choppers were at work that day.

By and by the woodman thought he would rest awhile. He leaned his ax against the tree and turned to sit down, but he tripped over an old, gnarled root, and before he could catch it, his ax slid down the bank and into the river!

The poor woodman gazed into the stream, trying to see the bottom, but it was far too deep there. The river flowed over the lost treasure just as merrily as before.

“What will I do?” the woodman cried. “I’ve lost my ax! How will I feed my children now?”

Just as he finished speaking, up from the lake rose a beautiful lady. She was the water fairy of the river, and she came to the surface when she heard his sad voice.

“What is your sorrow?” she asked kindly. The woodman told her about his trouble, and at once she sank beneath the surface and reappeared in a moment with an ax made of silver.

“Is this the ax you lost?” she asked.

The woodman thought of all the fine things he could buy for his children with the silver! But the ax wasn’t his, so he shook his head and answered, “No, my ax was only made of steel.”

The water fairy laid the silver ax on the bank and sank again into the river. In a moment she rose and showed the woodman another ax, “Perhaps this one is yours?” she asked.

The Honest Woodman

The woodman looked. "Oh, no! he replied. "This one is made of gold! It's worth many times more than mine."

The water fairy laid the golden ax on the bank. Once again she sank. Up she rose. This time she held the missing ax. "That is mine!" the woodman cried. "That is surely my old ax!"

"It is yours," said the water fairy, "and so are these other two now. They are gifts from the river, because you have told the truth."

And that evening the woodman trudged home with all three axes on his shoulder, whistling happily as he thought of all the good things they would bring for his family. ¶

How the Deer Got His Antlers

A Cherokee legend

Trickery is for losers.

Long ago, the deer had no horns. His head was smooth and sleek and he was able to run swiftly through the fields on the Cherokee land.

The rabbit was a great jumper. He could hop through the fields so quickly you sometimes had trouble following him with your eyes.

The animals began to wonder which of the two was the faster. A race was arranged and the prize was to be an elegant pair of antlers.

The sneaky rabbit was found to be cheating before the race had even begun. He was caught trying to clear away bushes and grass in the thicket so that he would have a straight, uncluttered path to the finish line.

The other animals were so disgusted with him they awarded the antlers to the deer without holding the race at all. The deer has worn the antlers proudly ever since.

The rabbit was then told that from that day on, he would have to cut down the bushes for a living. And to this day, he does. ¶

The Legend of the Dipper

Retold by J. Berg Esenwein & Marietta Stockard

A kind act is often its own reward

There had been no rain in the land for a very long time. It was so hot and dry that the land was parched and brown and even the big, strong trees were dying. The water dried up in the creeks and the fountains stopped bubbling. All the people and creatures were so thirsty! Everyone felt weak.

There was one little girl whose mother grew very ill. She said, "I must find some water for my mother." So she took a tin cup and began her search for water. By and by she found a tiny little spring up on a mountainside. It was almost dry. The water dropped, dropped, ever so slowly from under the rock. The girl held her cup carefully and caught the drops. She waited a long time until the cup was full of water. Then she started down the mountain holding the cup carefully, for she didn't want to spill a single drop.

On the way she passed a poor little dog. He could hardly drag himself along. He was panting for breath and his tongue hung from his mouth because it was so parched.

"Oh, you poor little dog," said the little girl, "you are so thirsty. I can't pass you without giving you a few drops of water. If I give you just a little there will still be enough for my mother."

So the little girl poured some water into her hand and held it down for the little dog. He lapped it up quickly and then he felt so much better that he frisked and barked and seemed almost to say, "Thank you, little girl." And the little girl didn't notice – but her tin dipper had changed into a silver dipper and was just as full of water as it had been before.

She thought about her mother and hurried along as fast as she could go. When she reached home it was late in the afternoon, almost dark. The little girl pushed the door open and hurried up to her mother's room. When she came into the room the old servant who helped the little girl and her mother, came to the door. She was so tired and so thirsty that she couldn't even speak to the little girl.

"Give her some water," said the mother. "She has worked hard all day and needs it more than I do." So the little girl held the cup to her lips and the old servant drank some of the water. She felt stronger and better right away and she went over to the mother and lifted her up. The little girl didn't notice that

the cup had changed into a gold cup and was just as full of water as it was before!

Then she held the cup to her mother's lip and she drank and drank. Oh, she felt so much better! When she had finished there was still some water left in the cup. The little girl was just raising it to her own lips when there came a knock at the door. The servant opened it and there stood a stranger. He was very pale and all covered with dust from traveling. "I am thirsty," he said. "I need a little water."

The little girl said, "I am sure that you need it far more than I do. Drink it all."

The stranger smiled and took the dipper in his hand, and as he took it, it changed into a diamond dipper. He turned it upside down and all the water spilled out and sank into the ground. And where it spilled a fountain bubbled up. The cool water flowed and splashed – enough for the people and all the animals in the whole land to have all the water they wanted to drink.

As they watched the water they forgot the stranger, but presently when they looked he was gone. They thought they could see him just vanishing in the sky – and there, clear and high, shone the diamond dipper.

The Big Dipper shines up there yet reminding people of the little girl who was kind and unselfish. **J**

The Lion and the Mouse

Aesop

Here is one of the best-loved stories of kindness paid and repaid. From it we learn that the power of compassion has been found within both the mighty and the meek. Kindness is not a feeble virtue.

One day a great lion lay asleep in the sunshine. A little mouse ran across his paw and wakened him. The great lion was just going to eat him up when the little mouse cried, "Oh, please, let me go, sir. Someday I may help you."

The lion laughed at the thought that the little mouse could be of any use to him. But he was a good-natured lion, and he set the mouse free.

Not long after, the lion was caught in a net. He tugged and pulled with all his might, but the ropes were too strong. Then he roared loudly. The little mouse heard him and ran to the spot.

"Be still, dear Lion, and I will set you free. I will gnaw the ropes."

With his sharp little teeth, the mouse cut the ropes, and the lion came out of the net.

"You laughed at me once," said the mouse. "You thought I was too little to do you a good turn. But see, you owe your life to a poor little mouse." **J**

The Little Plant

The power of kindness cannot be

diminished. From A Beka Reading

Series

Away on the edge of the forest stood a little plant, only a few inches tall.

But the ground around it was so cold and hard that the plant could not grow; instead it had feebly stood there for several years and had grown weaker.

“Grow, and be beautiful!” said the forest, sternly; but the plant did not grow.

“Don’t you want to grow?” said the magpie; and then he began to tell the little thing how lazy and useless it was; but the words went in one ear and out the other.

Still the plant did not grow.

“I will teach you to obey!” roared the wind, and he lashed the poor twig with its cold wings, so it came close to dying instead of springing up.

“You will surely grow, poor little thing,” said the sun kindly, and he poured warm spring rain from the sky and warmed up the earth around the plant.

And *then* the little twig shot up and became a beautiful tree, with a leafy crown and fragrant blossoms.

j

Little Sunshine

Retold by Etta Austin Blaisdell and Mary Frances Blaisdell

Bestowing compassion is like offering most other gifts: often it's the thought that counts.

Once there was a little girl named Elsa. She had a very old grandmother, with white hair, and wrinkles all over her face.

Elsa's father had a large house that stood on a hill.

Each day the sun peeped in at the south windows. It made everything look bright and beautiful. The grandmother lived on the north side of the house. The sun never came to her room.

One day Elsa said to her father, "Why doesn't the sun peep into Grandma's room? I know she would like to have him."

"The sun cannot look in at the north windows,"

said her father. "Then let us turn the house around, Papa."

"It is much too large for that," laughed her father.

"Will Grandma never have any sunshine in her room?" asked Elsa. "Of course not, my child, unless you can carry some to her."

After that Elsa tried and tried to think how she could carry the sunshine to her grandmother.

When she played in the fields, she saw the grass and the flowers nodding their heads. The birds sang sweetly as they flew from tree to tree.

Everything seemed to say, "We love the sun. We love the bright, warm sun." "Grandma would love it, too," thought the child. "I must take some to her."

When she was in the garden one morning she felt the sun's warm rays in her golden hair. Then she sat down and she saw them in her lap.

"I will take them in my dress," she thought, "and carry them to Grandma's room." So she jumped up and ran into the house.

"Look, Grandma, look! I have some sunshine for you," she cried. And she opened her dress, but there was not a ray to be seen.

"It peeps out of your eyes, my child," said her grandmother, "and it shines in your sunny, golden hair. I do not need the sun when I have you with me."

Elsa did not understand how the sun could peep out of her eyes. But she was glad to make her dear grandmother happy.

Every morning she played in the garden. Then she ran to her grandmother's room to carry the sunshine in her eyes and hair. **J**

Madame Rhinoceros and Her Dress

Arnold Lobel

Nothing is harder to resist than a bit of flattery.

Madame Rhinoceros saw a dress in a shop window. It was covered with polka dots and flowers. It was adorned with ribbons and lace. She admired it for a moment and then entered the shop.

"That dress in the window," said Madame Rhinoceros to a salesperson, "I would like to try it on." Madame Rhinoceros put on the dress. She looked at herself in the mirror. "I do not think this dress is at all attractive on me," she said.

"But Madame," said the salesperson, "you are completely wrong. This dress makes you look glamorous and alluring."

"If only I were sure," said Madame Rhinoceros.

"Ah, Madame," said the salesperson, "everyone who sees you wearing this dress will be filled with admiration and envy."

"Do you really think so?" asked Madame Rhinoceros, turning around and around in front of the mirror. "Absolutely," said the salesperson. "You have my word."

"Very well," said Madame Rhinoceros, "I will buy the dress, and I will wear it now."

Madame Rhinoceros left the shop. As she walked up the avenue, she saw that people were smiling and laughing at her.

"Admiration," thought Madame Rhinoceros.

She saw some people who were shaking their heads

and frowning. "Envy," thought Madame Rhinoceros.

She continued up the avenue. Everyone who saw her stopped and stared. Madame Rhinoceros felt more glamorous and alluring with every step.

The Milkmaid

From A Beka Reading Series

The pursuit of finery can be a messy thing.

Once upon a time a girl was walking along with a pail of milk. She sang a happy song, for she was thinking of the money she would get when she sold her milk. Then she said to herself –

“I have two gallons of milk, which I shall sell. With the money I shall buy fifty eggs. I shall put these under some of my hens. The hens will keep them warm until little chickens are hatched.”

“I shall give these chickens plenty of good food and clean water. They will grow fat, and by Christmas they will be large enough to sell. I can get enough money for them to buy a fine new dress.”

She was thinking so much about her new dress that she forgot to be careful. Her foot struck a stone. As she tried to keep from falling, the pail flew out of her hands, and, Oh, the milk was spilled! **J**

The Old Hound

From Beka Reading Series

It is good to remember the righteous.

Once there was a beautiful hound. He had long, silky ears and a smooth, bright coat. He was not only beautiful, but strong and swift, and a faithful servant. Wherever his master went hunting, the hound went with him and chased the deer. After many years, the hound grew old and feeble, but still he followed his master with the other dogs.

One day a stag had been chased till it was almost tired out, and the old hound caught up with it and seized it. His teeth were so old and broken that he could not hold on tightly. The stag gave a sudden bound and got away. Just then the master rode up, and seeing what had happened, was very angry. He took his whip to strike his faithful old hound.

“O, dear Master,” said the hound. “Do not strike me. I meant to do well. It is not my fault that I am old. If you do not like me as I am now, remember what I have been.” **J**

Someone Sees You

Traditional Folktale

This folktale reminds us that an act of dishonesty is never truly hidden.

Once upon a time a man decided to sneak into his neighbor's fields and steal some wheat. "If I take just a little from each field, no one will notice," he told himself, "but it will all add up to a nice pile of wheat for me." So he waited for the darkest night, when thick clouds lay over the moon, and he crept out of his house. He took his youngest daughter with him.

"Daughter," he whispered, "you must stand guard and call out if anyone sees me."

The man stole into the first field to begin reaping, and before long the child called out, "Father, someone sees you!"

The man looked all around, but he saw no one, so he gathered his stolen wheat and moved to a second field.

"Father, someone sees you!" the child cried again.

The man stopped and looked all around, but once again he saw no one. He gathered more wheat and moved to a third field.

A little while passed, and the daughter cried out, "Father, someone sees you!" Once more the man stopped his work and looked in every direction, but he saw no one at all, so he bundled his wheat and crept into the last field.

"Father, someone sees you!" the child cried again.

The man stopped his reaping, looked around, and once again saw no one. "Why in the world do you keep saying someone sees me?" he angrily asked his daughter. "I've looked everywhere, and I don't see anyone."

"Father," murmured the child. "Someone sees you from above." **J**

The Young Rooster

Arnold Lobel

A first failure may prepare the way for later success.

A young Rooster was summoned to his Father's bedside.

"Son, my time has come to an end," said the aged bird. "Now it is your turn to crow up the morning sun each day."

The young Rooster watched sadly as his Father's life slipped away.

Early the next morning, the young Rooster flew up to the roof of the barn. He stood there, facing the east.

"I have never done this before," said the Rooster. "I must try my best." He lifted his head and crowed. A weak and scratchy croak was the only sound he was able to make.

The sun did not come up. Clouds covered the sky, and a damp drizzle fell all day. All of the animals of the farm came to the Rooster.

"This is a disaster!" cried a Pig.

"We need our sunshine!" shouted a Sheep.

"Rooster, you must crow much louder," said a Bull. "The sun is ninety-three million miles away. How do you expect it to hear you?"

Very early the next morning, the young Rooster flew up to the roof of the barn again. He took a deep breath, he threw back his head and CROWED. It was the loudest crow that was ever crowed since the beginning of roosters.

The animals on the farm were awakened from their sleep with a start. "What a noise!" cried the Pig.

"My ears hurt!" shouted

the Sheep. "My head is

splitting!" said the Bull.

“I am sorry,” said the Rooster, “but I was only doing my job.”

He said this with a great deal of pride, for he saw, far to the east, the tip of the morning sun coming up over the trees. ¶