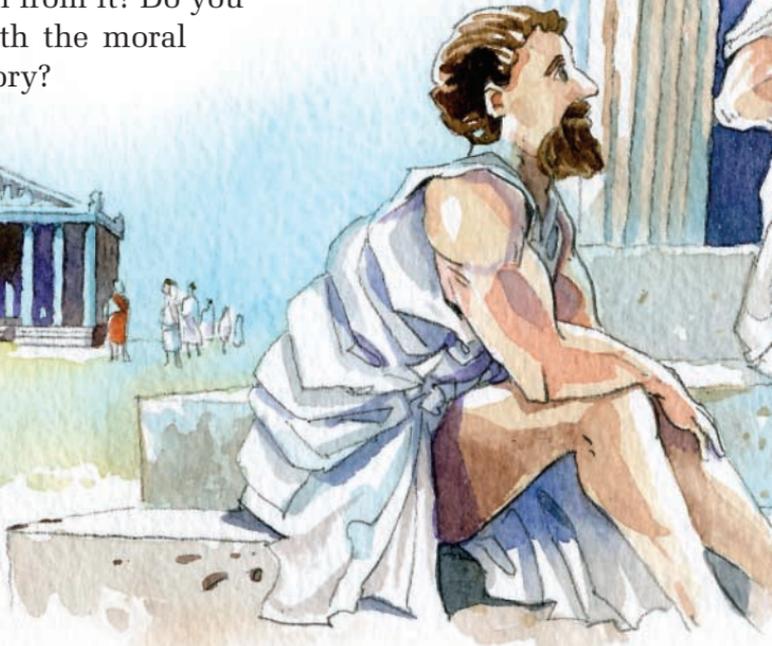


Introduction

The stories in this book come from *Aesop's Fables*. A fable is a story that has a message or a hidden meaning. What kind of message? Perhaps something like 'Be prepared', 'Think carefully before you do something!' or 'Don't believe everything that people say to you!' A message like this is called 'the moral' of the story.

Aesop's Fables are mostly stories about animals. These animals behave in funny ways. Some of them are very clever. Some are quite silly. Others are proud. Actually, they are just like people.

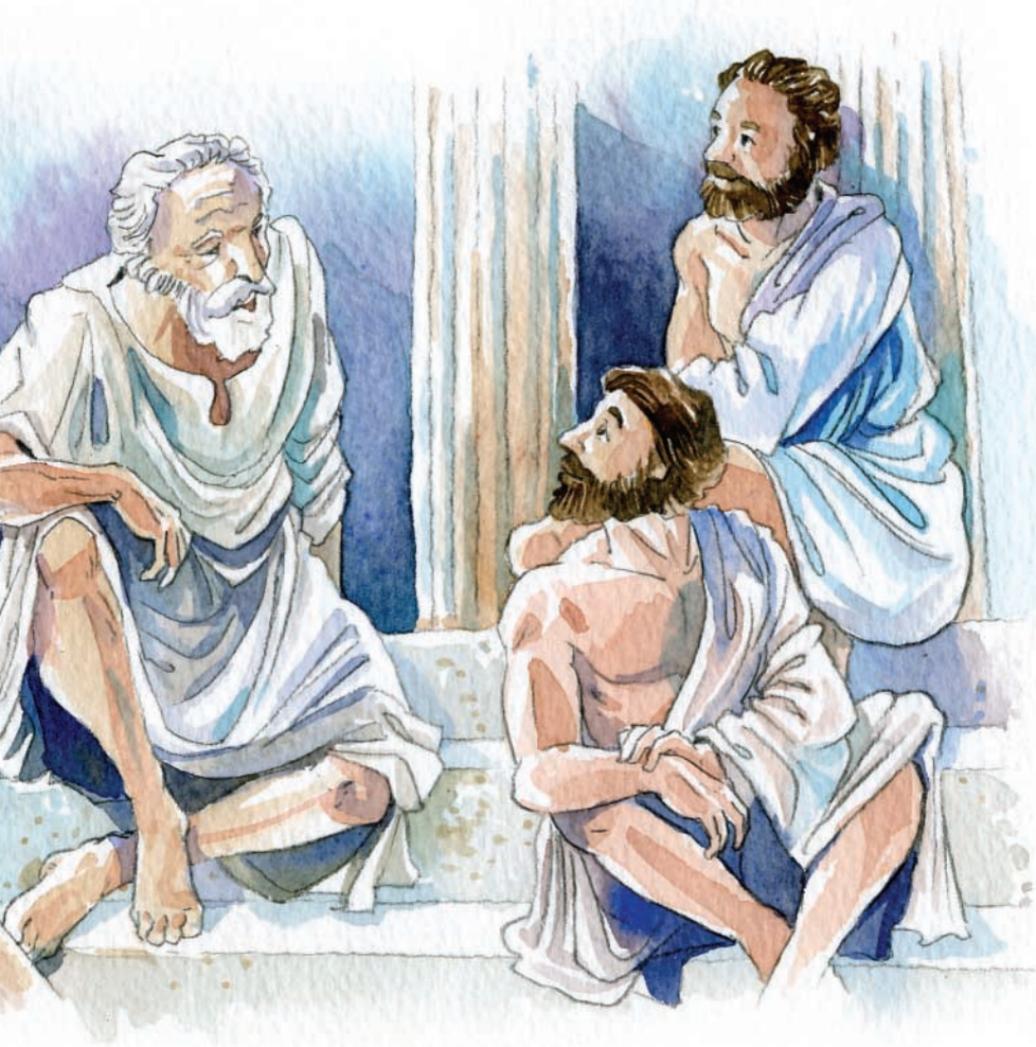
After you have read each story, think about its message. Does it tell you something about life? What can you learn from it? Do you agree with the moral of the story?



About Aesop

Aesop was Greek. He lived in the sixth century BC. He was a very wise man. He liked to tell stories. His stories made people laugh. The stories also taught people about human nature. They taught people how to live.

Long after he died, many different fables were collected in a book called *Aesop's Fables*. *Aesop's Fables* are very old. For thousands of years, people have enjoyed stories like these.



1

The Ant and the Grasshopper

A hungry insect

It is a winter's day. It is cold, but the sun is shining. A small brown insect is walking through a field. It is a grasshopper. It has wings and two large back legs. It is good at jumping. 5

Sometimes grasshoppers make a noise. The noise is high and sharp. This is how grasshoppers sing. They think this noise is sweet music.

But this grasshopper is not making music now. She is not jumping or flying. She walks slowly along the cold, hard ground. She looks tired. She is weak and sad. 10

The grasshopper comes to an ants' nest. Many ants are there. They are working. Each ant carries a grain of rice from the nest. It puts it on the ground, in the sunlight. Then it goes back for more. 15

The grasshopper looks at the rice.
'Food,' she thinks.

Busy workers

A soldier ant is standing near her. He is watching the others at work. The grasshopper speaks to him. 20

'Please, sir, may I take a few grains of rice?' she asks.

