PART SIX

Birds and Beasts

Hurt no living thing:
Ladybird nor butterfly,
Nor moth with dusty wing,
Nor cricket chirping cheerily,
Nor grasshopper so light of leap;
Nor dancing gnat, nor beetle fat,
Nor harmless worms that creep.

Christina Rossetti

Lessons in Living

Thornton W. Burgess

Try and miss and try again;
Thus success you will attain.
—OLD MOTHER NATURE

If ever there was a disappointed young Kingfisher it was the one who had just had his first lesson in the art of fishing. When Mother had caught that Minnow, he had opened his mouth expectantly, but Mother had swallowed it herself and told him to catch one, her eyes twinkling. Could he? He didn't know. He had never tried.

For some time they sat there watching. Then a Minnow appeared in the shallow water of the pool below. The young Kingfisher leaned forward and half lifted his wings.

"Wait until he is in deeper water," warned Mother. "You might hurt yourself there."

The Minnow swam about in the most tantalizing manner, where the water was very shallow. At last it went into deeper water. "Now!" exclaimed Mother.

The young Kingfisher flew out and hovered for an instant just above the little fish. He did it just as he had seen Mother do it. Then he pointed down, closed his wings, and plunged head first for that water. It seemed as if that water simply rushed straight up at him. He lost his courage. That swift plunge through the air and the sight of that water seeming to rush up to meet him frightened him. Without really knowing what he was doing, he spread his wings and checked

himself just as he touched the water. It splashed over him. It was his first experience with water, and somehow he liked it. But of course he didn't catch that Minnow. He merely gave it a great fright, and it darted off to hide behind a stone.

It was a crestfallen young Kingfisher who flew back up to that branch to perch beside his mother. "You have to go wholly under to catch a fish you know," said she.

"But I was afraid," protested the young fisherman.

"The water didn't hurt you, did it?" inquired Mother.

"No-o," confessed the young Kingfisher.

"Of course it didn't," replied Mother. "You'll soon get used to it, and when you do, you'll enjoy plunging into it. But if you want to catch a fish, you cannot hesitate. They move quickly, those fish. You have got to go down full speed. I'll show you.

Another Minnow had appeared in the pool below. Mother flew out, checked herself, hovered an instant, then shot down head first straight and true. There was a splash and almost instantly she was flying up and back to that perch, the Minnow in her bill. The young Kingfisher did hope that she would give him that one. Perhaps she intended to and it slipped out of her bill. Perhaps she dropped it purposely. Anyway it dropped. Down it fell, splash! into the water.

Leaning over, the young Kingfisher could see it on the bottom where the water was shallow but not too shallow. It did not swim for Mother had killed it. He eyed it longingly. Mother flew off down Laughing Brook to another pool. The young Kingfisher started to follow, then changed his mind. There was that little fish down there, and somehow he couldn't go away and leave it.

Mother was out of sight. He looked this way and that way to make sure that no one was watching him. He hovered and dived. Again the water rushed up toward him, or seemed to. Again his courage failed. This time he checked himself before he reached the water. Chagrined he went back to his perch. There lay that Minnow just as before. It was tantalizing. He was hungry and there he was staring right at a meal and afraid to get it.

Once more he flew out, hovered, and started a plunge only to check himself at the last instant. "If I didn't go down so fast I wouldn't mind so much," thought he. He noticed a branch lower down, only a little way above the water. He flew down to that. This made that little fish seem almost within reach. He made up his mind that this time he would have it. He plunged, and because he was such a little way above the water, he didn't have time to change his mind. He splashed into the water, seized the Minnow, and triumphantly flew back to his perch. There he turned the little fish around and swallowed it head first.

In much the same way his brothers and sisters learned to fish. Over and over again they were shown just how to do it. Over and over again they tried and failed, but each time they learned something and remembered what they learned. So in time they began to catch fish for themselves. They learned not to fear the plunge into the water. They learned how to judge direction and distance so as to shoot down straight and true and fast so that the little fish would not have time to dart away.

It was great fun and there was a great deal of splashing in the Smiling Pool and in the little pools along Laughing Brook. Some learned more quickly than others. Some were bolder than others. As soon as one had caught a fish, he or she was eager to catch another. Mother and Father were very willing. It meant just so much less work for them.

Longlegs the Heron, who likes to fish in peace and quiet along the edge of the Smiling Pool, was much upset by this noisy splashing crew of youngsters and spoke his mind freely. But this did him no good, and for a while he did his fishing elsewhere. So the young Kingfishers learned how to use their wings and where to watch for little fishes and how to catch them. Then one morning Rattles showed them a new use for water.

They had had good luck fishing and were sitting in a tree just below the Smiling Pool where they could see the latter but where they were themselves more or less hidden by the leaves of surrounding trees and bushes. They were half dozing when suddenly they heard the sharp,

harsh rattle of their father. There was something in that sound that suddenly made them all very wide awake, something that suggested both fright and a warning.

Again they heard it, nearer this time. Then they saw Rattles coming from across the Green Meadows and flying as they never had seen him fly before. What was the matter? What did it mean? Then they saw another bird with bigger wings and traveling much faster than was Rattles. It was Sharpshin the Hawk, and it was clear even to their inexperience that Sharpshin was after their father and unless something happened would catch him in a moment or two.

What could Father do? What chance had he against that swift-flying robber? Nine little hearts seemed to be right up in nine little throats as they watched it. It was dreadful. Yes, sir, it was a dreadful race to watch. Just as they wanted to close their eyes so as not to see their father struck by that fierce Hawk, he showed them a trick. He showed them that water was of more use than just to fish and bathe in.

Out over the Smiling Pool he shot with Sharpshin already reaching for him. Then down into the water and quite out of sight he plunged while Sharpshin with a scream of rage and disappointment swept on past and up over the treetops. You see he was moving so fast that he could not check himself at once.

Rattles was under only an instant, coming up and flying low and straight for Laughing Brook and the shelter of the overhanging trees and bushes. Presently he joined the young Kingfishers. "Did you see that?" he asked.

They all nodded admiringly. "Remember it," said he crisply. "Sooner or later every one of you will have use for that trick. Don't forget it."

"We won't!" promised the nine little Kingfishers.

WORDS TO WATCH

Kingfisher	tantalizing	crestfallen	triumphantly
Minnow	hovered	chagrined	Heron

QUESTIONS

1. What lessons in living did the young bird learn?
2. How did his mother get him to dive into the water?
3. What did the bird's father do to escape Sharpshin the Hawk?
4. What was the father bird's name?
5. What kind of bird was this story about?

The Wolf and the Crane

Aesop

A wolf, with a bone in his throat, for a sum
Once hired a crane in a hurry to come.
The wolf on his haunches sat, frightened and still;
The crane then inserted his surgical bill,
And, extracting the sliver, demanded his pay.
The wolf with a grin, "O Crane, go away—
It's surely enough that I left you alone,
When you stood with your head inside of my own."

In serving the wicked, child, hope for no gains,
And be glad if you come out alive for your pains.

The Peacemaker

Frank Lillie Pollock

It was the end of September, and the mosquitoes and sand-flies had ceased to make the woods unendurable. Scott Caldwell had been following a chain of small lakes in his canoe, and at night he camped at the same spot where he had camped on his round of a month before.

Scott was a forest-ranger of the Algonquin National Park, which lies between the Ottawa River and Lake Huron, and his duties were to look out for fires, kill wolves whenever he got a chance, keep the canoe-ways open, and warn off unlawful hunters; for no shooting is permitted in that immense game preserve.

Before he turned in to his blankets, he heard the bellow of a bull moose somewhere, far away across the forest—a vast grumbling thunder, more charged with savagery than any other sound in the wilderness. He had heard that sound almost every night for two weeks. The park was full of moose that had grown very bold under two generations' safety from rifles. It was their mating season, and the bulls were challenging one another and fighting savagely.

He went to sleep, but was awakened before dawn by a tremendous uproar. He jumped out of his blankets and put his head out of the tent. It was a brilliant, windless night, with moonlight almost as bright as day, and away across the yellow autumn ridges there was a noise of furious smashing and tearing among the brush, mingled with savage gruntings and roars, and sharp, recurrent clash and rattle. It was somewhere down the lake.

As soon as he got the sleep out of his eyes, Scott realized what it was. A couple of bull moose must have been fighting it out. Few men have ever seen such a duel, and Scott was keenly eager. He looked at his watch; it was after three in the morning, and after listening a little longer to the thrilling sounds, he took his rifle, launched his canoe, and paddled down along the shore.

He thought that he might be able to see the fight from the water, but when he drew opposite the noises, it was apparent that they were a hundred yards or so inland. He got on shore, therefore, and stole in through the cedar thickets, holding his rifle ready for self-defense in case one of the maddened animals should charge him.

Suddenly the sounds of battle ceased. Scott halted, listened, and waited. He thought he heard an occasional stamping, but the fight seemed over. He advanced a few rods further, cautiously, and then stopped with a paralyzing shock of fright. Not twenty feet from him were two moose, looming black and gigantic over the scrubby thickets. They were standing motionless, with lowered heads close together, face to face.

For a moment Scott was afraid even to breathe. The moose did not move, and he ventured to take a step backward. A stick crashed under his boot heel, and at the sound both moose plunged and leapt forward from side to side, but without separating their heads. The broad prongs of horn creaked and rattled together.

Scott stood still, astonished at their queer behavior, but presently he perceived the reason. The prongs of the bulls had become interlocked, so that the fighters were unable to disengage themselves. This is a mishap that occurs not infrequently to the fighting moose and deer. The timber-wolves usually finish such helpless victims

quickly, and woodsmen now and again pick up a pair of great skulls with the antlers still fast locked together.

With more assurance Scott examined the trapped warriors at close range. One was an old bull, standing full seven feet to the top of his humped shoulders, with a superb spread of polished ebony-dark horn. The other, a smaller and probably younger animal, had a great jagged gash along his flank that still dripped dark blotches on the pine-needles.

They both wrestled and roared as the ranger approached, wrenching their antlers desperately, but they could not break loose. Scott was struck with pity. He could not leave the splendid animals to the first wolf pack that passed. It was part of his duty to protect the game. He decided to wait till morning and see if he could not find some means of disentangling them.

So he sat down at the foot of a tree and waited for daylight. The moose moved about restlessly, butting and tugging alternately and striking at each other with their forehoofs. Probably each accused the other of holding him. Presently the larger bull stumbled and fell, dragging his antagonist with him, and they kicked vainly in the endeavor to get up again, till at last they lay quiet on their sides, apparently tired out.

With the earliest light Scott examined them. The prongs of the smaller bull had been forced between those of his antagonist by a tremendous effort, and the broad antlers were so entangled that nothing short of a saw or a lever could get them free.

Scott had no saw, and would have hesitated to go so near the animals if he had, but with a long lever he thought that he could do the work. The moose could not get up or move much, and so long as he kept out of reach of the sharp forehoofs he would be in no danger.

He paddled hurriedly back to camp and got his ax. When he returned the moose lay as he had left them. He cut a sapling about ten feet long and as thick as his arm, and trimmed it, sharpening one end. With this lever he approached the panting bulls, and rather nervously tried to insert the point between the locked prongs.

But at the first touch of the pole the animals fell into such a wild and sudden panic that he retreated hastily. They roared, kicked, and writhed over the ground, with the pine-needles flying in clouds. Their effort was too violent to last long, and in a minute or two they lay quiet again, heaving and exhausted for the moment, Scott thought.

He came up again, on the side opposite the dangerous hoofs, and once more tried to force the sharpened pole between the tangled antlers. Again and again he failed as the moose jerked their heads aside, but finally, with a quick thrust he managed to insert the lever in the right place, and he threw his weight on the other end.

The tough horn creaked and bent; so did the lever. The larger moose jerked his head violently — there was a snap, and his head was free. Almost before Scott could realize that he had succeeded, the smaller bull had sprung up and vanished into the woods like a brown flash, with a scattering of dead leaves.

Then the big bull went up as if he had been raised by a spring, and before Scott could leap aside, he was knocked headlong into a clump of hemlock, ten feet away, by a single sweep of the broad antlers. Luckily it was only a glancing blow, or it would have crushed in his ribs. Scott scarcely understood what had happened before the bull crashed after him into the young trees like a locomotive, with a bellow that fairly chilled Scott's backbone.

The moose was stopped by the elastic resistance of the shrubs, and Scott scuttled into the densest corner like a scared rabbit. The bull roared savagely, with outstretched neck. Scott was far from expecting any such ingratitude for all his pains, and when he realized the situation, he was very angry. If he had had his rifle, he would have shot the beast at once, but he had laid the weapon down somewhere out of sight.

The moose sniffed noisily into the thicket and tried to strike the ranger with its forehoofs. The blows came crashing through the branches, but Scott was able to dodge them by wriggling to the other side of the clump. This game could not last long, however, and while he watched his enemy, he cast rapid glances about for some safe refuge.

Twenty yards away a great cedar had fallen, lodging its top among the branches of a beech. Its trunk sloped from the ground to a height of twenty or thirty feet, and Scott saw that if he could only reach the butt, he could run up the sloping trunk and be out of danger in a moment.

The difficulty was to reach it. But a swift thrust of the hoof that missed his shoulder by an inch warned him that he would have to attempt it. He crawled nearer the edge of his covert, on the side farthest from the moose, gathered his legs tensely under him, and at a favorable moment he sprang out and ran.

A crash told him that the bull was at his heels. He dodged around one side of a large pine as the moose plowed past on the other. As the animal charged blindly back, Scott again slipped aside and made another bolt for his tree.

He reached it this time, by the margin of a second, for the bull's antlers clattered against the trunk and almost knocked him off as he ran up its slope. After the first couple of yards the cedar was close set with rusty branches, and they tore his clothes as he forced his way up the swaying trunk.

The trunk swayed and gave as he climbed it. The bull, following him underneath, butted it hard and shook it from end to end. Evidently its top was very slightly caught in the beech that supported it.

Scott had not climbed halfway to the top of the tangled trunk,

when he felt a dangerous yielding under his feet. There was a great, sustained, increasing crackle and crash from the top, and the trunk sank under him. Scott gave one terrified glance down at the bull waiting almost below. He made an effort to jump aside, but the branches held him. The cedar went sailing down and completed its long-interrupted descent in a tremendous shock and smashing against the earth.

The shock drove Scott deep among the branches, tearing his face and hands, and he tried to wriggle deeper yet. He expected the bull to plunge upon him the next instant. Blinded among the twigs, he could see nothing, but he was aware in a few seconds of a great smashing and struggling that was shaking the whole mass of the fallen tree.

He disengaged himself from the branches. The moose was not visible, but down in the heavy cedar-top Scott saw a furiously struggling mass of dark hair and the black tip of a shovel-shaped horn. The bull had been caught by the falling tree and was buried among the branches. When he peered into the tangle, Scott thought that the animal was pinned down by the trunk, but had been saved from crushing by the mass of limbs. The bull was safe enough now, however, and perfectly incapable of getting out.

Scott felt no great pity for it, and went back to camp with his rifle and ropes. Next day, however, he returned to the place with an ax, intending to chop the animal free. He found four timber-wolves sitting on their haunches round the tree, waiting patiently till the bull should cease to struggle, or till they overcame their dread of a trap. They bolted at Scott's appearance, too quickly for him to get a shot, and he chopped the moose out of the branches.

The animal was quelled at last. When it was free, it struggled painfully to its legs, gazed anxiously at Scott, and limped heavily down to a little stream to drink for a long time. Then, while Scott watched it, it seemed to melt into the woods with the speed and silence of a shadow.

WORDS TO WATCH

unendurable	rods	endeavor	covert
generations	looming	lever	yielding
recurrent	disengage	glancing	sustained
thickets	ebony	bellow	quelled

QUESTIONS

1. Why is the title of this story "The Peacemaker"?
2. Why did Scott decide to help disengage the antlers of the two moose?
3. How did Scott try to disengage the antlers?
4. How did Scott escape the old bull?
5. What was Scott's job?

Seldom "can't,"
Seldom "don't,"
Never "shan't,"
Never "won't."

Christina Rossetti

A Talk in the Honey Market

Abby Morton Diaz

Flowers: Good morrow, good bees, full early ye fly;
What will ye buy? what will ye buy?

Bees: We'll buy your honey, if fresh and sweet,
And good enough for our queen to eat.
And we'll store it away for our winter's treat;
For when comes the snow,
And icy winds blow.
The flowers will all be dead you know.

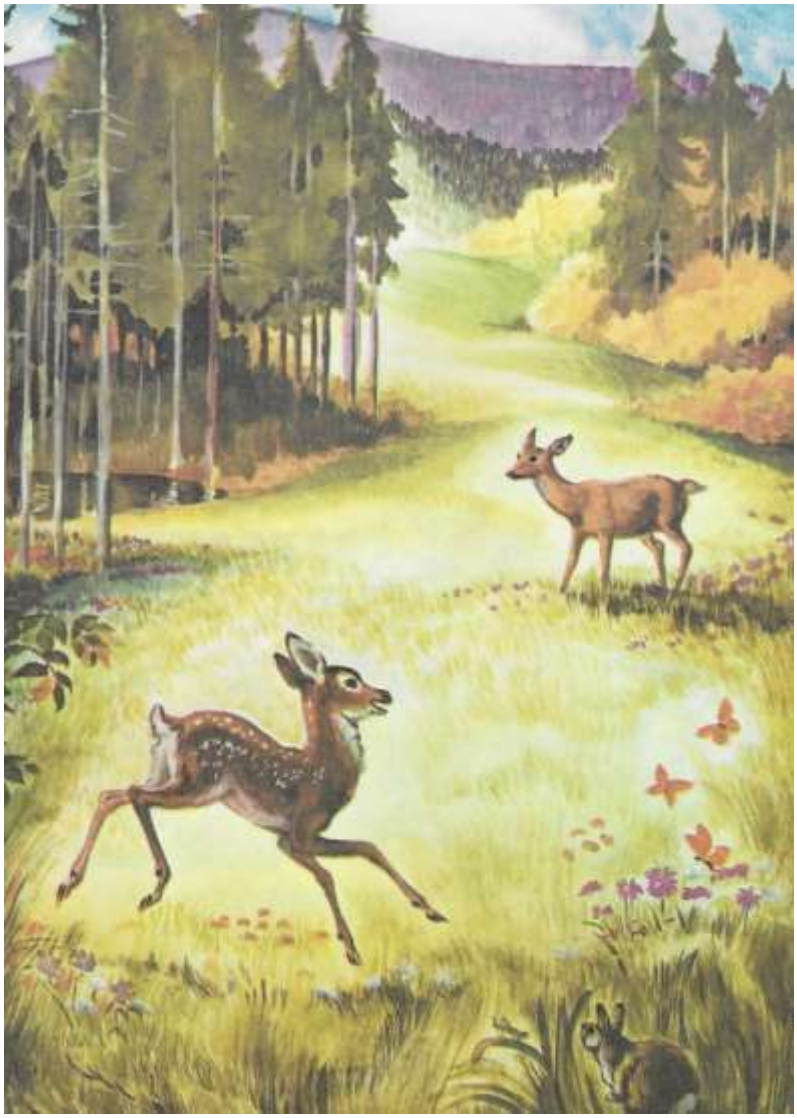
Flowers: And what will ye pay, what will ye pay,
If we provide for that wintry day?

Bees: Oh, we'll tell you fine tales. Great news ye shall gain,
For we've traveled afar over valley and plain.
And the whispering leaves of the forest trees,
They tell all their secrets to wandering bees.
We linger about where the little brooks flow,
And we hear all they sing, though they murmur so low.
We have played by the shore with sweet Rose-Marie,
And have heard the moan of the sorrowful sea.
We spend long hours,
In the woodland bowers,
And have news from your kindred, the dear wild flowers.
We know the swamp pinks, with their fragrance so fine,
The lupine, the aster, and bright columbine.
We know where the purple geranium grows,
And fragrant sweetbrier, and pretty wild rose.
And perhaps we'll tell, if your honey you'll sell,
Why everyone loveth the wild flowers so well.

Flowers: Oh, tell us this secret, and take all our store!
Tell us how to be loved, and we'll ask nothing more.

WORDS TO WATCH

linger bowers sweetbrier



How Bambi Discovers the Meadow

Felix Salten

It grew very bright. The trail ended with the tangle of vines and bushes. A few steps more and they would be in the bright open space that spread out before them. Bambi wanted to bound forward, but his mother had stopped.

"What is it?" he asked impatiently, already delighted.

"It's the meadow," his mother answered.

"What is a meadow?" asked Bambi insistently.

His mother cut him short. "You'll soon find out for yourself," she said. She had become very serious and watchful. She stood motionless, holding her head high and listening intently. She sucked in deep breathfuls of air and looked very severe.

"It's all right," she said at last, "we can go out."

Bambi leaped forward, but his mother barred the way.

"Wait till I call you," she said. Bambi obeyed at once and stood still. "That's right," said his mother, to encourage him, "and now listen to what I am saying to you." Bambi heard how seriously his mother spoke and felt terribly excited.

"Walking on the meadow is not so simple," his mother went on. "It's a difficult and dangerous business. Don't ask me why. You'll find that out later on. Now do exactly as I tell you to. Will you?"

"Yes," Bambi promised.

"Good," said his mother, "I'm going out alone first. Stay here and wait. And don't take your eyes off me for a minute. If you see me run back here, then turn round and run as fast as you can. I'll catch up with you soon." She grew silent and seemed to be thinking. Then she went on earnestly, "Run anyway as fast as your legs will carry you. Run even if something should happen . . . even if you should see me fall to the ground. . . . Don't think of me, do you understand? No matter what you see or hear, start running right away and just as fast as you possibly can. Do you promise me to do that?"

"Yes," said Bambi softly. His mother spoke so seriously.

She went on speaking. "Out there if I should call you," she said, "there must be no looking around and no questions, but you must get behind me instantly. Understand that. Run without pausing or stopping to think. If I begin to run, that means for you to run too, and no stopping until we are back here again. You won't forget, will you?"

"No," said Bambi in a troubled voice.

"Now I'm going ahead," said his mother, and seemed to become calmer.

She walked out. Bambi, who never took his eyes off her, saw how she moved forward with slow, cautious steps. He stood there full of expectancy, full of fear and curiosity. He saw how his mother listened in all directions, saw her shrink together, and shrank together himself, ready to leap back into the thickets. Then his mother grew calm again. She stretched herself. Then she looked around satisfied and called, "Come!"

Bambi bounded out. Joy seized him with such tremendous force that he forgot his worries in a flash. Through the thicket he could see only the green treetops overhead. Once in a while he caught a glimpse of the blue sky.

Now he saw the whole heaven stretching far and wide, and he rejoiced without knowing why. In the forest he had seen only a stray sunbeam now and then, or the tender, dappled light that played through the branches. Suddenly he was standing in the blinding hot sunlight whose boundless power was beaming upon him. He stood in the splendid warmth that made him shut his eyes but which opened his heart.

Bambi was as though bewitched. He was completely beside himself with pleasure. He was simply wild. He leaped into the air three, four, five times. He had to do it. He felt a terrible desire to leap and jump. He stretched his young limbs joyfully. His breath came deeply and easily. He drank in the air. The sweet smell of the meadow made him so wildly happy that he had to leap into the air.

Bambi was a child. If he had been a human child, he would have shouted. But he was a young deer, and deer cannot shout, at least not the way human children do. So he rejoiced with his legs and with his whole body as he flung himself into the air. His mother stood by and was glad. She saw that Bambi was wild. She watched how he bounded into the air and fell again awkwardly, in one spot. She saw how he stared around him, dazed and bewildered, only to leap up over and over again. She understood that Bambi knew only the narrow deer tracks in the forest and how his brief life was used to the limits of the thicket. He did not move from one place because he did not understand how to run freely around the open meadow.

So she stretched out her forefeet and bent laughingly towards Bambi for a moment. Then she was off with one bound, racing around in a circle so that the tall grass stems swished.

Bambi was frightened and stood motionless. Was that a sign for him to run back to the thicket? His mother had said to him, "Don't worry about me no matter what you see or hear. Just run as fast as you can." He was going to turn around and run as she had commanded him to, but his mother came galloping up suddenly. She came up with a wonderful swishing sound and stopped two steps from him. She bent towards him, laughing as she had at first and cried, "Catch me." And in a flash she was gone.

Bambi was puzzled. What did she mean? Then she came back again running so fast that it made him giddy. She pushed his flank with her nose and said quickly, "Try to catch me," and fled away.

Bambi started after her. He took a few steps. Then his steps became short bounds. He felt as if he were flying without any effort on his part. There was a space under his hoofs, space under his bounding feet, space and still more space. Bambi was beside himself with joy.

The swishing grass sounded wonderful to his ears. It was marvelously soft and as fine as silk where it brushed against him. He ran round in a circle. He turned and flew off in a new circle, turned around again and kept running.

His mother was standing still, getting her breath again. She kept following Bambi with her eyes. He was wild.

Suddenly the race was over. He stopped and came up to his mother, lifting his hoofs elegantly. He looked joyfully at her. Then they strolled contentedly side by side.

Since he had been in the open, Bambi had felt the sky and the sun and the green meadow with his whole body. He took one blinding, giddy glance at the sun, and he felt its rays as they lay warmly on his back.

Presently he began to enjoy the meadow with his eyes also. Its wonders amazed him at every step he took. You could not see the tiniest speck of earth the way you could in the forest. Blade after blade of grass covered every inch of the ground. It tossed and waved luxuriantly. It bent softly aside under every footstep, only to rise up unharmed again. The broad green meadow was starred with white daisies, with the thick, round red and purple clover blossoms and bright, golden dandelion heads.

"Look, look, Mother!" Bambi exclaimed. "There's a flower flying."

"That's not a flower," said his mother; "that's a butterfly."

Bambi stared at the butterfly, entranced. It had darted lightly from a blade of grass and was fluttering about in its giddy way. Then Bambi saw that there were many butterflies in the air above the meadow. They seemed to be in a hurry and yet moved slowly, fluttering up and down in a sort of game that delighted him. They really did look like gay flying flowers that would not stay on their stems but had unfastened themselves in order to dance a little. They looked, too, like flowers that come to rest at sundown but have no fixed places and have to hunt for them, dropping down and vanishing as if they really had settled somewhere, yet always flying up again, a little way at first, then higher and higher into the sky, and always searching farther and farther because all the good places have already been taken.

Bambi gazed at them all. He would have loved to see one close by. He wanted to see one face to face but he was not able to. They sailed in and out continually. The air was aflutter with them.

When he looked down at the ground again he was delighted with the thousands of living things he saw stirring under his hoofs. They ran and jumped in all directions. He would see a wild swarm of them, and the next moment they had disappeared in the grass again.

"Who are they, Mother?" he asked.

"Those are ants," his mother answered.

"Look," cried Bambi, "see that piece of grass jumping. Look how high it can jump!"

"That's not grass," his mother explained; "that's a nice grasshopper."

"Why does he jump that way?" asked Bambi.

"Because we're walking here," his mother answered, "he's afraid we'll step on him."

"O," said Bambi, turning to the grasshopper who was sitting on a daisy; "O," he said again politely, "you don't have to be afraid; we won't hurt you."

"I'm not afraid," the grasshopper replied in a quavering voice; "I was only frightened for a moment when I was talking to my wife."

"Excuse us for disturbing you," said Bambi shyly.

"Not at all," the grasshopper quavered. "Since it's you, it's perfectly all right. But you never know who's coming and you have to be careful."

"This is the first time in my life that I've ever been on the meadow," Bambi explained; "my mother brought me. . . ."

The grasshopper was sitting with his head lowered as though he were going to butt. He put on a serious face and murmured, "That doesn't interest me at all. I haven't time to stand here gossiping with you. I have to be looking for my wife. Hopp!" And he gave a jump.

"Hopp!" said Bambi in surprise at the high jump with which the grasshopper vanished.

Bambi ran to his mother. "Mother, I spoke to him," he cried.

"To whom?" his mother asked.

"To the grasshopper," Bambi said, "I spoke to him. He was very nice to me. And I like him so much. He's so wonderful and green and you can see through his sides. They look like leaves, but you can't see through a leaf."

"Those are his wings," said his mother.

"O," Bambi went on, "and his face is so serious and wise. But he was very nice to me anyhow. And how he can jump! 'Hopp!' he said, and he jumped so high I couldn't see him any more."

They walked on. The conversation with the grasshopper had excited Bambi and tired him a little, for it was the first time he had ever spoken to a stranger. He felt hungry and pressed close to his mother to be nursed.

Then he stood quietly and gazed dreamily into space for a little while with a sort of joyous ecstasy that came over him every time he was nursed by his mother. He noticed a bright flower moving in the tangled grasses. Bambi looked more closely at it. No, it wasn't a flower, but a butterfly hung heavily to a grass stem and fanned its wings slowly.

"Please sit still," Bambi said.

"Why should I sit still? I'm a butterfly," the insect answered in astonishment.

"O, please sit still, just for a minute," Bambi pleaded; "I've wanted so much to see you closely. Please."

"Well," said the butterfly, "for your sake I will, but not for long."

Bambi stood in front of him. "How beautiful you are!" he cried fascinated; "how wonderfully beautiful, like a flower!"

"What?" cried the butterfly, fanning his wings, "did you say like a flower? In my circle it's generally supposed that we're handsomer than flowers."

Bambi was embarrassed. "O, yes," he stammered, "much handsomer, excuse me, I only meant . . ."

"Whatever you meant, is all one to me," the butterfly replied. He arched his thin body affectedly and played with his delicate feelers.

Bambi looked at him enchanted. "How elegant you are!" he said.

"How elegant and fine! And how splendid and white your wings are!"

The butterfly spread his wings wide apart, then raised them till they folded together like an upright sail.

"O," cried Bambi, "I know that you are handsomer than the flowers. Besides, you can fly and the flowers can't because they grow on stems, that's why."

The butterfly spread his wings. "It's enough," he said, "that I can fly." He soared so lightly that Bambi could hardly see him or follow his flight. His wings moved gently and gracefully. Then he fluttered into the sunny air.

"I only sat still that long on your account," he said, balancing in the air in front of Bambi. "Now I'm going."

That was how Bambi found the meadow.

WORDS TO WATCH

bound	bewitched	luxuriantly	ecstasy
expectancy	flank	entranced	embarrassed
dappled	elegantly	quavering	enchanted

QUESTIONS

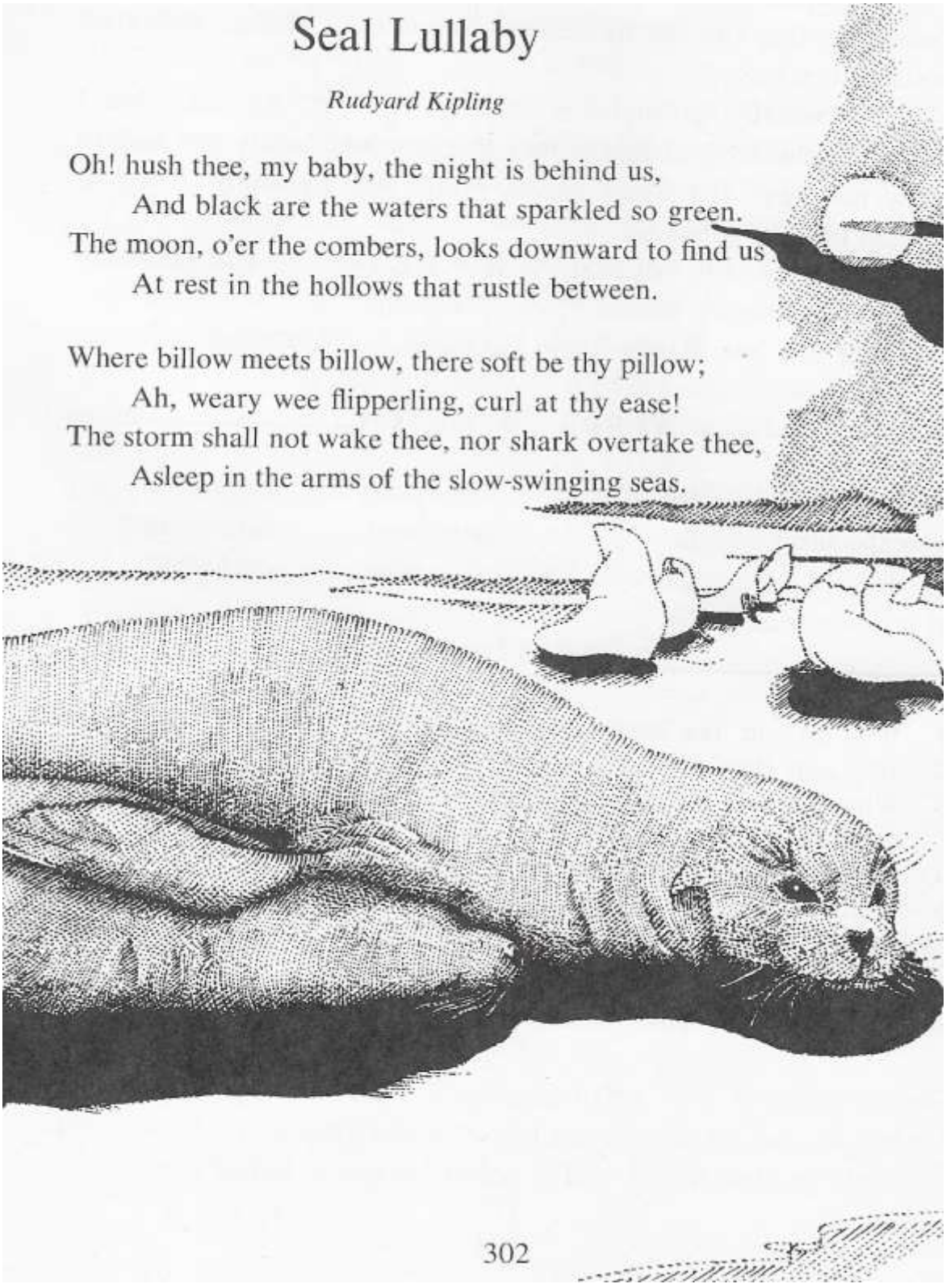
1. Why do you like Bambi?
2. Why was Bambi so pleased with the meadow?
3. Why wouldn't Bambi's mother let him step out into the meadow until she had gone out first?
4. What did Bambi think the butterfly was?
5. What did Bambi think the grasshopper was?

Seal Lullaby

Rudyard Kipling

Oh! hush thee, my baby, the night is behind us,
And black are the waters that sparkled so green.
The moon, o'er the combers, looks downward to find us
At rest in the hollows that rustle between.

Where billow meets billow, there soft be thy pillow;
Ah, weary wee flipperling, curl at thy ease!
The storm shall not wake thee, nor shark overtake thee,
Asleep in the arms of the slow-swinging seas.



Black Beauty's Midnight Ride

Anna Sewell

I

One night I had eaten my hay and was lying down in my straw fast asleep, when I was suddenly wakened. John unlocked the stable door and came in, calling out, "Wake up, Beauty! You must go well now, if ever you did."

Almost before I could think, he had the saddle on my back and the bridle on my head. He took me at a quick trot up to the Hall door. The Squire stood there with a lamp in his hand.

"Now, John," he said, "ride for your life; that is, for your mistress's life. There is not a moment to lose. Give this note to Doctor White. Give your horse a rest at the inn, and be back again as soon as you can."

John said, "Yes, sir," and was on my back in a minute.

Away we went through the park, and through the village, and down the hill. Then there was before us a long piece of level road by the river side. John said to me, "Now, Beauty, do your best," and so I did.

I wanted no whip nor spur, and for two miles I galloped as fast as I could lay my feet to the ground. I don't believe that my old grand-

father who won the race at Newmarket could have gone faster.

When we came to the bridge, John pulled me up a little and patted my neck. "Well done, Beauty! Good old fellow!" he said. He would have let me go slower, but my spirit was up, and I was off again as fast as before.

The air was frosty, and the moon was bright; it was very pleasant. We came through a village, then through a dark wood, then uphill and downhill. After an eight miles' run, we came to the town, through the streets, and into the marketplace. It was all quite still except the clatter of my feet on the stones; everybody was asleep.

The church clock struck three as we drew up at Doctor White's door. John rang the bell twice, and then knocked at the door like thunder. A window was thrown up, and Doctor White, in his nightcap, put his head out and said, "What do you want?"

"Mrs. Gordon is very ill, sir. Master wants you to go at once. He thinks she will die if you cannot get there. Here is a note."

"Wait," he said. "I will come."

He shut the window and was soon at the door.

"The worst of it is," he said, "that my horse has been out all day and is quite done up. My son has just been sent for, and he has taken the other. What is to be done? Can I have your horse?"

"He has come at a gallop nearly all the way, sir, and I was to give him a rest here. But I think my master would not be against it if you think fit, sir."

"All right," he said. "I will soon be ready."

John stood by me and stroked my neck; I was very hot. The doctor came out with his riding whip.

"You need not take that, sir," said John. "Black Beauty will go till he drops. Take care of him, sir, if you can. I should not like any harm to come to him."

I will not tell about our ride back. The doctor was a heavier man than John, and not so good a rider. However, I did my very best.

When we came to the hill, the doctor drew me up. "Now, my good fellow," he said, "take some breath." I was glad he did, for that breath-

ing helped me on, and soon we were at the Hall door. The doctor went into the house, and Joe led me to the stable.

I was glad to get home. My legs shook under me, and I could only stand and pant. I had not a dry hair on my body. The water ran down my legs, and I steamed all over—Joe used to say, like a pot on the fire.

Poor Joe! He was young and small, and he knew very little. His father, who would have helped me, had been sent to the next village; but I am sure Joe did the very best he knew.

He rubbed my legs and my chest, but he did not put my warm cloth on me. He thought I was so hot that I would not like it. Then he gave me a pailful of water to drink. It was cold and very good, and I drank it all. Then he gave me some hay and some corn; and thinking he had done right, he went away.

Soon I began to shake and tremble, and turned deadly cold. Oh, how I wished for my warm, thick cloth! I wished for John, but he had eight miles to walk, so I lay down in my straw and tried to go to sleep.

After a long while I heard John at the door. I gave a low moan, for I was in great pain. He was at my side in a moment, stooping down by me. I could not tell him how I felt, but he seemed to know it all. He covered me up with two or three warm cloths, and then ran to the house for hot water. He made some warm gruel, which I drank, and then I think I went to sleep.

John seemed to be very much put out. I heard him say to himself, over and over again, "Stupid boy! Stupid boy! No cloth put on, and I dare say the water was cold too. Boys are no good." But Joe was a good boy after all.

I was now very ill. John nursed me night and day and would get up two or three times in the night to come to me.

My master, too, often came to see me. "My poor Beauty," he said one day, "my good horse! You saved your mistress's life, Beauty! Yes, you saved her life." I was very glad to hear that, for it seems the doctor had said that if we had been a little longer, it would have been too late.

II

One night when John and Tom were sitting in the stable near me, Tom said in a low voice, "I wish, John, you'd say a bit of a kind word to Joe. The boy is quite heartbroken; he can't eat his meals, and he can't smile. He says he knows it was all his fault, though he is sure he did the best he knew; and he says if Beauty dies, no one will ever speak to him again. It goes to my heart to hear him. I think you might give him just a word; he is not a bad boy."

After a short pause, John said slowly, "You must not be too hard on me, Tom. I know he meant no harm; I never said he did. I know he is not a bad boy, but that horse is the pride of my heart, and to think that his life may be flung away in this manner is more than I can bear. If you think I am hard on the boy, I will try to give him a good word tomorrow—that is—I mean, if Beauty is better."

"Well, John, thank you. I knew you did not wish to be too hard, and I am glad you see it was only ignorance."

John's voice almost startled me as he answered, "*Only* ignorance! Only *ignorance!* How can you talk about *only* ignorance? Don't you know that it is the worst thing in the world, next to wickedness?—and which does the more mischief heaven only knows. If people can say, 'Oh, I did not know! I did not mean any harm,' they think it is all right.

"Bill Starkey did not mean to frighten his brother into fits when he dressed up like a ghost and ran after him in the moonlight; but he did.

"You were a good deal cut up yourself, Tom, two weeks ago when those young ladies left your hothouse door open, with a frosty east wind blowing right in. You said it killed a good many of your plants."

"A good many!" said Tom. "There was not one of the tender cuttings that was not nipped off. I was nearly mad when I came in and saw what was done."

"And yet," said John, "I am sure the young ladies did not mean it. It was only ignorance!"

I heard no more of this conversation, for I went to sleep, and in the morning I felt much better. But I often thought of John's words when I came to know more of the world.

WORDS TO WATCH

Squire gruel ignorance

QUESTIONS

1. What was the purpose of the midnight ride?
2. Why did Beauty almost die from the midnight ride?
3. Why did John feel that ignorance is the worst thing in the world next to wickedness?
4. Do you think that ignorance is an excuse when something goes wrong? Why or why not?
5. How do you know that Beauty finally got better?

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
The grass is bright with raindrops;—on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth.

William Wordsworth

My Cat, Mrs. Lick-A-Chin

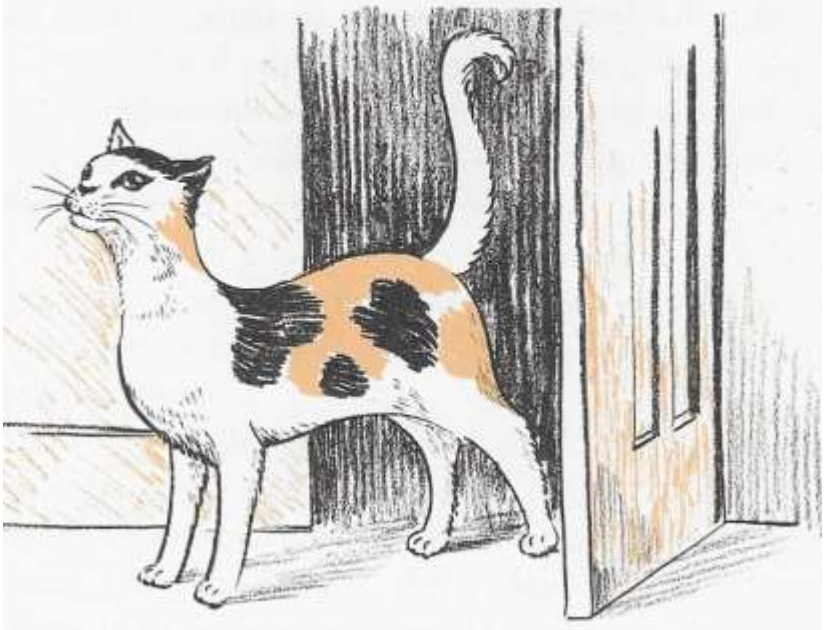
John Ciardi

Some of the cats I know about
Spend a little time in and a lot of time out.
Or a lot of time out and a little time in.
But *my* cat, Mrs. Lick-a-chin,
Never knows *where* she wants to be.
If I let her in she looks at me
And begins to sing that she wants to go out.
So I open the door and she looks about
And begins to sing, "Please let me in!"

Poor silly Mrs. Lick-a-chin!

The thing about cats, as you may find,
Is that no one knows what they have in mind.

And I'll tell you something about that:
No one knows it less than my cat.



Old Abe

Probably the most famous bird this country ever knew was a bald eagle named "Old Abe." This story tells what made him famous and how he got his name. It is a true story and was known by millions of school children a generation ago.

In the spring of 1861 some Indians, while making maple sugar in northern Wisconsin, captured a young eagle in the top of a tall pine tree. They carried it to the home of a settler and traded it to the settler's wife for a basket of corn. The young bird grew into a fine pet and was content to stay about the dooryard. The other household pets, however, didn't care for his company; they kept at a safe distance and never offered to pick a fight.

When the eagle was about six months old, the settler took him to Eau Claire and offered him to a new company of soldiers as a pet. The soldiers were so delighted with the offer that they paid the owner five dollars for the bird, and renamed their company the "Eau Claire Eagles."

When the "Eau Claire Eagles" marched into Camp Randall with the proud young eagle alongside their flag, they attracted a lot of attention. Crowds gathered to see the strange pet and watch his antics. Some wit suggested calling him "Old Abe," in honor of President Abraham Lincoln. This name pleased everyone, so "Old Abe" he remained to the end of his days, and his regiment became known as the "Eagle Regiment"—the Eighth Wisconsin.

In a few months the regiment started for the front. All along the route people gathered to see the soldiers and especially to see their pet. At one place a man offered two hundred dollars for the bird. At St.

Louis another man offered the soldiers five hundred dollars for their pet. But Old Abe was not for sale at any price.

One member of the company was given particular charge of Old Abe. A perch was made for him in the shape of a slanting shield on the end of a six-foot pole, and to this the bird was tied with a thirty-foot stout cord. While on the march his keeper carried his charge high above the heads of all the soldiers. Sometimes the bird tired of his captivity and broke away, but he never failed to return and always knew to which regiment he belonged.

Old Abe's place, whether in battle or on the march, was always beside the colors. On one occasion the Eagle Regiment had halted and another regiment was ordered to march by them. As the colors came by, the color bearer, of course, saluted the flag, and Old Abe, not to be outdone by a mere soldier, stretched himself up to full height and flapped out a salute to the flag. That thrilled the soldier boys and called forth cheer after cheer for the noble bird.

All together Old Abe took part in thirty-eight battles. Sharpshooters tried in vain to pick him off. Several times bullets passed through his feathers, and once a slight skin wound was found on his right wing. He was always at his post of duty and never flinched. Every man in the regiment loved Old Abe and would have died for him if need be. His presence always gave his comrades courage. In battle his scream was wild and commanding, five or six notes in quick succession. It gave the men a startling thrill and inspired them to deeds of valor.

After the Eagle Regiment returned home, the soldier bird was presented to the state of Wisconsin. A room was fitted up for him in the basement of the State Capitol and a perch built outside in the park. Here the famous bird was visited by thousands, and here he lived until his untimely death. He perished in a fire that broke out in the Capitol.

Nor was Old Abe forgotten after death. His skin was mounted and placed in the rotunda of the Capitol, and other thousands came to see him. One day a visitor wearing large eyeglasses asked if that was Old Abe, the Wisconsin war eagle. When told it was the very bird, he

exclaimed with boyish delight, "By George! I am delighted to see him! I learned about him from my reader when I was a boy in school." When asked to write his name on the register, he wrote, "Theodore Roosevelt, Oyster Bay, New York."

WORDS TO WATCH

Eau Claire	regiment	valor
antics	sharpshooters	capitol

QUESTIONS

1. Why did the soldiers call the bird "Old Abe"?
2. Where did Old Abe sit while the soldiers marched?
3. How many battles did Old Abe take part in?
4. How did Old Abe die?
5. Do you know other stories about brave and faithful animals?

A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all the other virtues.

Cicero

Rolf's Leap

Georgiana M. Craik

"You're making friends with my old Rolf, are you boys? Dear old Rolf!" said Uncle Dick; and at the sound of his voice, away broke Rolf from the two lads, sending them right and left like a couple of ninepins, and, bounding forward, lame leg and all, pressed his faithful head against his master's side and was lustily wagging his tail.

"That's my good old dog!" said Uncle Dick, and stroked his favorite's shaggy back and shook the paw that Rolf kept solemnly presenting for his acceptance at least a dozen times over.

The two boys and Uncle Dick began to walk round the garden, and they came to take shelter at last in the arbor.

"You've got fine red cheeks, boys," said Uncle Dick, "and two pairs of sturdy legs. Rolf and I would like to be able to jump about like you, but our jumping days are over. Not but that Rolf took a finer leap once than either of you lads has ever done yet," said Uncle Dick, after a moment or two, and stooped down to pat his favorite's great head.

"A noble leap, wasn't it, my old dog?" he said, and Rolf looked up with his gentle eyes, too sleepy to say much.

The boys sat down to rest; and so Will said, "Tell us what sort of a leap Rolf took, Uncle Dick."

"We were both of us younger than we are now," he said, "when Rolf and I first came together. Rolf was a puppy. It was just when I was going out to Africa that someone gave Rolf to me. 'He comes of a fine stock, and if he proves as good a dog as his father, you won't part with him at the end of a year for a trifle,' my friend said.

"I soon found that he was right, for, I tell you, boys, by the year's end I wouldn't have parted with him, not if I had parted with my last shilling, and I'd been asked to sell him for a thousand pounds.

"I went out with my regiment to Africa to the Cape of Good Hope.

"We weren't very hard worked out there, and many a pleasant expedition did I have of a few days up country or along the coast, sometimes with a companion, sometimes alone with only my horse and old Rolf. I shall never forget some of those little excursions, for it was on one of them that Rolf took his leap.

"I had been riding for five or six miles one pleasant afternoon. It was just hot enough to make the thought of a swim delicious; so I jumped from my horse and, letting him loose to graze, lay down for a quarter of an hour to cool myself. Then I began to make ready for my swim.

"I was standing on a little ledge of cliff some six or seven feet above the sea. It was high tide and the water at my feet was about six feet deep. 'I shall have a delightful swim,' I thought to myself as I threw off my coat.

"Just at that moment Rolf, in a very excited way, flung himself upon me, evidently understanding the meaning of the proceeding. I repeated the remark aloud.

" 'Yes, we'll have a delightful swim, you and I together,' I said. 'A grand swim, my old lad'; and I clapped his back as I spoke and encouraged him, as I was in the habit of doing, to express his feelings without reserve.

"But, rather to my surprise, instead of wagging his tail and wrinkling his nose and performing any of his usual antics, the creature only lifted up his face and began to whine.

"He had lain for the quarter of an hour, while I had been resting, at the edge of the little cliff with his head dropped over it, but whether he had been taking a sleep in that position or had been amusing himself by watching the waves was more than I knew.

" 'What's the matter, old fellow?' I said to him when he set up this dismal howl. 'Don't you want to have a swim? Well, you needn't unless you like, only I mean to have one; so down with you and let me get my clothes off.'

"But instead of getting down, the dog began to conduct himself in the strangest way, first seizing me by the trousers with his teeth and pulling me to the edge of the rock as if he wanted me to plunge in dressed as I was, then catching me again and dragging me back with all his might, much as though I were a big rat that he was trying to worry.

"This pantomime, I declare, he went through three separate times, barking and whining all the while, till I began to think he was going out of his mind.

"At last I lost patience with him. I couldn't conceive what he meant. For two or three minutes I tried to pacify him, and so long as I took no further steps to remove my clothes, he was willing to be pacified; but the instant I started to undress, he was on me once more, pulling me this way and that, hanging on my arms, and howling with his mouth up in the air.

"At last I lost my temper, snatched up my gun, and struck him with the butt end of it.

"He was quieter after I had struck him," said Uncle Dick, after a little pause. "For a few moments he lay quite still at my feet, and I had begun to think that he was going to give me no more trouble, when, all at once, just as I had got ready to jump into the water, the creature sprang to his feet and flung himself upon me again. He threw himself with all his might upon my breast and drove me backwards.

"I imagined the poor beast was trying for some reason of his own to have his own way. I thought it was my business to teach him that he was not to have his own way, but that I was to have mine; and so I struck him three or four times with the end of my gun till at last I freed myself from him.

"He gave a cry when he fell back. I call it a cry, for it was more like something human than a dog's howl — something so wild and pathetic that, angry as I was, it startled me. I think if time enough had been given me, I would have made some last attempt then to understand what the creature meant.

"I was standing a few feet in from the water, and as soon as I had shaken him off, he went to the edge of the bit of cliff and stood there for a moment till I came up to him, and then — just as in another second I should have jumped into the sea — my brave dog, my noble dog, gave one last whine and one look into my face and took the leap before me.

"And then, boys, in another instant I saw what he had meant. He had scarcely touched the water when I saw a crocodile slip like lightning from a sunny ledge off the cliff and seize him by the hind legs.

"You know that I had my gun close at hand, and in the whole course of my life I never was so glad to have my gun beside me. It was loaded, too, and a revolver. I caught it up and fired into the water. I fired three times and two of the shots went into the brute's head.

"One missed him, and the first seemed not to harm him much, but the third hit him in some vital place, I hope — some sensitive place, at any rate, for the hideous jaws started wide.

"Then I began with all my might to shout out 'Rolf!' I couldn't leave my post, for the brute, though he had let Rolf go and had dived for a moment, might make another spring, and I didn't dare to take my eyes off the spot where he had gone down.

"I called to my wounded beast with all my might, and when he struggled through the water and gained a moment hold on the rock, I jumped down and caught him, and half carried, half dragged him up the little bit of steep ascent till we were safe on the dry land again. And then — I — I forgot for a moment or two that I was a man at all and burst out crying like a child, hugging my faithful dog.

"He licked the tears off my cheeks, my poor old fellow, I remember that. We looked a strange pair, as we lay on the ground together with our heads side by side.

"When I had come to my senses a little I had to try to get my poor Rolf moved. We were a long way from any house, and he couldn't walk a step. I tore up my shirt and bound his wounds as well as I could, then I put on my clothes and called to my horse, and in some way, as gently as I could, I got him and myself together upon the horse's back, and we began our ride.

"There was a village about four or five miles off, and I made for that. It was a long, hard jolt for a poor fellow with both his hind legs broken, but he bore it patiently. I never spoke to him, but, panting as he was, he was ready to lick my hands and look lovingly up into my face.

"I got him to a resting-place at last, after a weary ride, and then I had his wounds dressed; but it was weeks before he could stand upon his feet again, and when at last he began to walk, he limped, and he has gone on limping ever since.

"It's all an old story now, you know," said Uncle Dick abruptly; "but it's one of those things that a man doesn't forget as long as he lives."

Uncle Dick stooped down again as he ceased to speak, and Rolf, disturbed by the silence, raised his head to look around. As his master had said, it was a grand old head still, though the eyes were growing dim now with age. Uncle Dick laid his hand upon it, and the bushy tail began to wag. It has wagged at the touch of that hand for many a long day.

"We've been together for fifteen years. He's getting old now," said Uncle Dick.

WORDS TO WATCH

acceptance	expedition	pathetic	hideous
arbor	pantomime	revolver	jolt
stock	pacify	brute	abruptly

QUESTIONS

1. Why would Uncle Dick not part from Rolf for a "thousand pounds"?
2. How did Uncle Dick try to keep Rolf quiet when he wanted to go for a swim?
3. How did Uncle Dick save Rolf from being killed?
4. Where were Rolf and Uncle Dick when the events in this story took place?

Small service is true service while it lasts;
  Of friends, however humble, scorn not one;
The daisy, by the shadow that it casts,
  Protects the lingering dewdrop from the sun.

William Wordsworth

The Sandpiper

Celia Thaxter

Across the lonely beach we flit,
One little sandpiper and I,
And fast I gather, bit by bit,
The scattered driftwood, bleached and dry.
The wild waves reach their hands for it,
The wild wind raves, the tide runs high,
As up and down the beach we flit,
One little sandpiper and I.

Above our heads the sullen clouds
Scud, black and swift, across the sky;
Like silent ghosts in misty shrouds
Stand out the white lighthouses high.
Almost as far as eye can reach
I see the close-reefed vessels fly,
As fast we flit along the beach.
One little sandpiper and I.

Comrade, where wilt thou be tonight,
When the loosed storm breaks furiously?
My driftwood fire will burn so bright!
To what warm shelter canst thou fly?
I do not fear for thee, though wroth
The tempest rushes through the sky;
For are we not God's children both,
Thou, little sandpiper, and I?

PART SEVEN

Ancient Myths

When I hear the old men
Telling of heroes,
Telling of great deeds
Of ancient days,
When I hear them telling,
Then I think within me
I too am one of these.

transcribed from the
Chippewa Indian
by Mary Austin

The Greek Gods

Why are there stars in the sky? Why do we have a sun to warm us and to light the world? Why do we have a moon to make nights soft and clear? What makes the clouds gather, the lightning flash, and the thunder roar? Why does it rain? Why do the waves of the ocean wash everlastingly onto the rocks, grinding them into sand so fine that it can run through our fingers?

Nowadays scientists can answer some of these questions, because they have studied and discovered many things about the ways of nature and the universe.

In the olden times, however, men did not have these answers. They did not know much about the universe, and things they did not understand they explained in their own way. They imagined the sky, the seas, and the earth to be inhabited by gods and goddesses and all kinds of giants, dwarfs, and monsters. They told many stories about these gods, so many that even now we have more books about them than we can read.

These stories we call *myths,* which comes from the Greek word *mythos,* meaning tale or legend.

Most of the Greek myths are stories about gods and goddesses, who were ruled by a king and queen. The Greek name of the king was Zeus and that of the queen was Hera; their Roman names were Jupiter and Juno. Since the Romans believed in the same gods as the Greeks, they gave them names in their own language. The Greek names are used in this story, the Roman names are given in parentheses.

Zeus, king of the gods, had more power than all of the other gods together. He was Lord of the Sky, the Rain God, and the Cloud Gatherer, who enforced his authority with the sky's most terrible

weapon, the thunderbolt. He lived with the other gods on Mount Olympus.

Hera (Juno), Zeus's wife and sister, was the protector of married women. She became jealous very easily and as a result caused terrible wars and great troubles among men.

Poseidon (Neptune) was the ruler of the sea. He was Zeus's brother and second only to him in power. Since the Greeks on both sides of the Aegean were seamen, the god of the sea was important to them. Poseidon could start or stop any storm at will. When he drove in his golden chariot over the waters, the thunder of the waves died down to complete stillness. He was always shown carrying his trident, a three-pronged spear, with which he could shatter whatever he wished.

Hades (Pluto), another brother of Zeus, was the master of the underworld and ruled over the dead. He was sometimes called Pluto, the god of wealth, since the precious metals were buried under the earth and belonged to him.

Zeus's messenger Hermes (Mercury) could fly through the air. He had a winged hat, a pair of winged shoes, and a wand with which he could make peace between people who were quarreling. One time he waved his wand at two snakes who were fighting each other. The snakes became friends at once and twined themselves around the wand.

Hermes was the shrewdest and most cunning of the gods. He was the god of commerce and the market, the protector of traders.

Athena (Minerva), the daughter of Zeus, had sprung full-grown and in full armor from his head. She was Zeus's favorite child, and he even trusted her with carrying his shield and his thunderbolt. She was often called the goddess of wisdom. The Greek town of Athens was named after her.

Apollo, the son of Zeus, carried a golden lyre and was the master musician. He also was the god of light and of truth. There was no darkness in him, and he never told a lie. As the god of light, it was Apollo's task to guide the sun chariot over the skies each day. Since fierce animals waited along this path, only a god such as Apollo could perform this dangerous job day after day.

Aphrodite (Venus), the goddess of love and of beauty, had sprung from the foam of the sea near Cythera. She was the most beautiful of all the goddesses, irresistible to everyone who saw her.

Zeus had the power to place heroes, gods, nymphs, or whomever he pleased into the sky among the stars. There they would shine forever, never to be forgotten. We call these groups of stars *constellations*.

Here are three myths about the origin of some of these constellations.

Callisto was a beautiful nymph who had a son called Arcas. Hera became jealous of Callisto, so she turned Callisto into a bear and condemned her to roam the forests forever.

One day Arcas went hunting. He chased a bear, ready to kill it. Fortunately Zeus was watching and realized that Arcas was about to kill his own mother. He immediately turned the son into a small bear and placed both, the great and the small bear, among the stars in the sky.

From that day on, the Great Bear and the Little Bear can be seen shining in the sky as one of the many groups of stars or constellations. Today the Great Bear is often called the Big Dipper and the Little Bear is called the Little Dipper.

Orion was a great Greek hunter, who boasted that he could kill any animal he met. The poisonous scorpion wanted to prove him wrong, so he stung and killed Orion.

Artemis (Diana), the goddess of hunting, persuaded Zeus to give Orion a place in the sky. Zeus placed him among the stars as far from Scorpius as possible. That is the reason why Orion sets when Scorpius rises.

Another story tells about Perseus, who had promised the wicked king Polydectes that he would bring him the head of a gorgon, called Medusa. This was no small task. The gorgons were terrible monsters who lived on an island and who were known for their deadly powers. Medusa was the most fearsome of them all. Instead of hair she had

poisonous snakes crawling over her head and shoulders; instead of hands she had eagle's claws, and whoever looked into her horrible eyes was turned instantly to stone.

Perseus asked the goddess Athena for help. She willingly gave him instructions on how to cut off Medusa's head without being turned to stone. The god Hermes provided Perseus with his winged sandals and his sword.

After seven years of hardships and with the help of the gods, Perseus finally reached Medusa and cut off her head. He brought the head to wicked Polydectes as he had promised and held it up for him to see. The king and his men forgot the terrible curse. They looked into Medusa's eyes and were all turned instantly to stone.

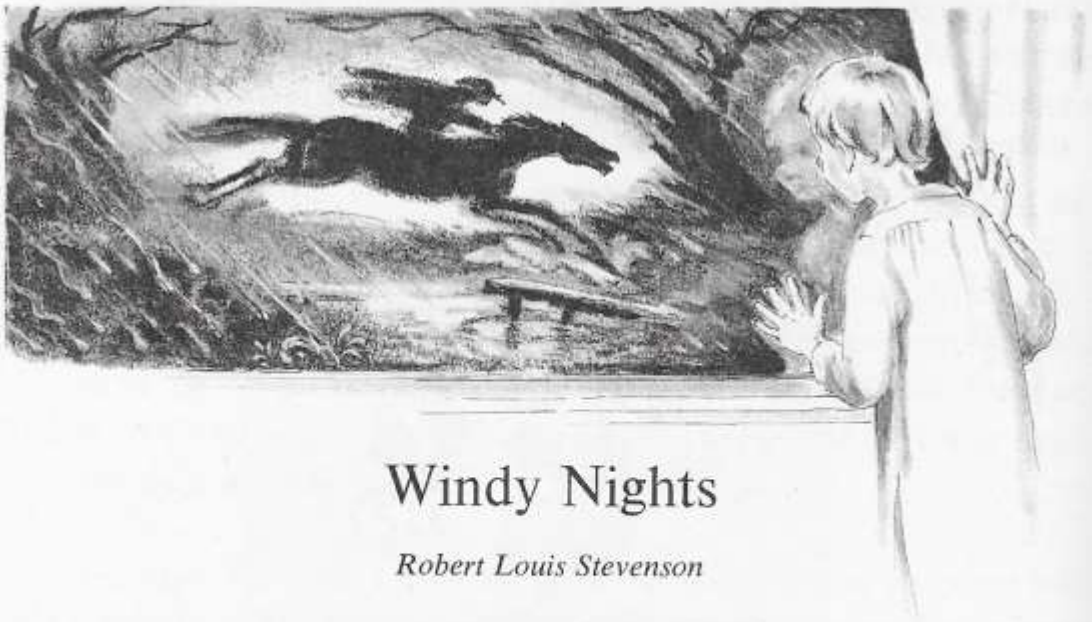
On a clear night you can still see Perseus in the heavens, holding the awful gorgon's head in his hand.

WORDS TO WATCH

everlastingly	Poseidon	commerce	Big Dipper
Zeus	Aegean	Athena	Orion
Hera	chariot	Apollo	scorpion
authority	Hades	lyre	Artemis
thunderbolt	Pluto	Aphrodite	persuaded
Mount Olympus	Hermes	irresistible	Perseus
protector	twined	nymphs	Medusa

QUESTIONS

1. How did men in the olden times explain things they could not understand?
2. Who were the most important of the Greek gods?
3. What is a constellation?
4. According to the Greek story what was the origin of the Big and Little Dipper?
5. What was Medusa's most terrible power?



Windy Nights

Robert Louis Stevenson

Whenever the moon and stars are set,
Whenever the wind is high,
All night long in the dark and wet,
A man goes riding by.
Late in the night when the fires are out,
Why does he gallop and gallop about?

Whenever the trees are crying aloud,
And ships are tossed at sea,
By, on the highway, low and loud,
By at the gallop goes he.
By at the gallop he goes, and then
By he comes back at the gallop again.

Arachne

A Greek Myth

Arachne was a beautiful girl who lived many, many years ago in the faraway land of Greece. She was a wonderful weaver. People came from far and near to see her at her work.

She liked best to weave under the green trees in the forest. There she pictured so skillfully the birds flying in and out among the branches that people said, "We can almost hear them sing."

All of this praise quite turned Arachne's pretty little head. She became so proud and vain that no one could love her.

"No one can equal my work," she would say, with a toss of her head. "Athena herself cannot do it."

Now Athena, the goddess of wisdom, became much vexed that Arachne should make such a boast. "She is a foolish little girl," said Athena, "and I must teach her better."

One day as Arachne sat weaving, an old woman came up. It was Athena herself, but Arachne did not know it.

"You weave very well," said she, sitting down.

"Indeed I do, old woman," replied Arachne. "There is no one in the whole world who can equal me."

"Try to be more careful of your speech, my child," said the goddess gently.

"I have no need to be careful of my speech. Athena herself cannot weave as well as I," said Arachne, as she gave the old woman a proud stare.

At this the old woman smiled. Then she rose and Arachne saw standing before her the great goddess. At first Arachne turned scarlet. Then she turned pale. But in a moment her vanity and pride came back.

"A contest," she cried. "I'll challenge you to a contest."

Both set up their looms and began to weave most beautiful pictures.

As Athena wove, one could see a picture of her contest a short time before against the god Neptune. This contest had taken place in a beautiful city which was to be named for the god who gave it the best gift.

All the people were gathered together, with the gods among them. Neptune had struck the earth with his trident, and a noble horse stood beside him. This was his gift to the city. Athena had stood with hand uplifted. She made a beautiful olive to grow before them. Athena had won. Let me tell you why. The horse was the sign of war and the olive the sign of peace. All the people understood, for peace is greater than war. The city is called Athens to this day.

Just as Athena finished her picture, she turned to look at Arachne's loom. She too had just finished. Arachne had chosen to weave the story of Europa, the little girl who was carried away by a great white bull. Arachne pictured the bull swimming in the ocean with the little Europa laughing as she sat on his back.

"You have done very well, Arachne," said the goddess, with a gentle touch of her hand. At that Arachne looked at Athena's picture. At the first glance she saw that her work could not compare with Athena's. She was so ashamed that she ran away and tried to kill herself.

Athena would not allow this, but changed Arachne into the industrious little insect, the spider. You surely have seen the beautiful colors in her web.

WORDS TO WATCH

Arachne	scarlet	Europa	industrious
vexed	looms		

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Athena come to see Arachne?
2. Which story did Athena picture in her weaving?
3. Why did Athena change Arachne into a spider?
4. Do you feel sorry for Arachne? Why?

Politeness is to do and say
The kindest thing in the kindest way.

The Apple of Discord and the Mischief It Caused

A Greek Myth

The Apple of Discord

Long ago in the ancient city of Troy a little prince was born. He was fair and beautiful, but he was destined to be the ruin of his people.

It had been foretold in a dream that this child should be a flaming torch to set Troy on fire.

King Priam, fearing for the safety of his people, thought it was his duty to have his little son put to death. He commanded that a shepherd should carry the child to a lonely mountain side and leave him there. The king was very sad, because he loved his son and grieved to do him harm.

The shepherd obeyed the king unwillingly, and then returned to his home, heavy at heart, thinking all the time of the helpless baby whom he had left alone on the mountain. At last he could bear the thought no longer, and he hastened back. To his joy, he found the little prince still alive, so he carried him home in secret and kept him there as his own child.

Paris, as the boy was named, grew up with the shepherd lads, not knowing that he was a king's son. He became tall and straight, and so beautiful that his fame spread far and wide. He tended sheep on the mountain side while the time drew near when the prophecy was to be fulfilled.

Now it happened that the king of a far-off country was to wed a fair sea-nymph, Thetis. Kings and princes were bidden to the wedding feast, and even the great gods came to celebrate and to do honor to Thetis.

Upon a high throne at the head of the hall sat mighty Zeus, and near him was proud Hera, his wife. There also were the shining sun god and his sister, the silver-footed moon goddess. Athena, the goddess of wisdom, came too, and Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty, and many others.

In the midst of the merrymaking, there entered suddenly an unbidden guest—the goddess of discord. Before any one had time to cry, "Beware!" she had cast a golden apple upon the table and had disappeared. Swift-footed Hermes seized the apple and read aloud the message it bore: FOR THE FAIREST.

Not even Discord herself could have wished for greater results from her evil deed. At once strife arose in the hall of feasting, for each goddess thought that she deserved the apple. Most eager of all were Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite; before them, mortal maidens and lesser goddesses wisely became silent.

Among these three, the quarrel rose higher and higher, until Zeus commanded that a judge should decide the question once and for all, and let them have peace. Because he was unwilling to make the decision himself, he announced that he would appoint a judge who should declare which goddess was the fairest.

So he sent Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite to a certain mountain side. "There," he said, "you will find a fair young shepherd tending the flocks. He shall decide to whom the apple belongs."

The three goddesses soon came to the mountain where Paris tended his sheep.

Handing him the golden apple, they asked him to whom he would give it. The youth gazed upon them in wonder, quite unable to say which one was the most beautiful.

Each goddess in turn tried to win his favor by the offer of gifts. First Hera spoke, tempting him with the promise of a mighty empire and great wealth.

Athena offered him glory and victory in war, and wisdom which should make him worthy of all honor.

But Aphrodite smiled upon him and whispered that she would give him the fairest woman in the world for his wife.

At her words, Paris forgot the longing for wealth and power that Hera's offer had aroused in him. He forgot his desire for victory. To Aphrodite he gave the golden apple. Little did he know that his choice meant ruin for his country, and for thousands of happy men and women.

Hera and Athena departed with hearts full of wrath. But Aphrodite smiled upon Paris and told him to bide his time until her promise should be fulfilled.

From that day Paris was restless and discontented. He no longer cared to tend his flocks upon the mountain or to strive with the other young shepherds in the footrace and wrestling match. He left his mountain home one morning and went down to the city of Troy. On that day it chanced that great games were being held there, and Paris, taking part in the sports, put to shame all the other young men.

King Priam, watching this splendid youth, asked whence he came, but no one knew. At length the old shepherd stepped forth from among the spectators and told the king that Paris was really the prince who had been left on the mountain side to die.

Priam received his lost son joyfully, giving no thought to the prophecy that he should be the ruin of their city.

Paris came to dwell in the king's palace and returned no more to the shepherd's home. Honors were given him; riches and power were at his command. Yet he never forgot the promise of Aphrodite nor ceased to long for its fulfillment.

In those days the city of Sparta in Greece was ruled by Menelaus, a great king and a brave warrior. He was married to Helen, whose wonderful beauty had drawn suitors from every land to her father's court.

The father of Helen was a wise man. When he saw kings and princes coming from afar to seek his daughter in marriage, he knew that only one of them could be made happy, and he did not wish the others to become his enemies. Therefore, before he chose a husband for Helen, he made all the suitors take oath to abide by his decision. They also pledged themselves to help or protect her if ever they were needed. So Helen was wed to Menelaus, and the disappointed suitors went home, vowing to come to her defense whenever they should be called.

Years went by, and at length Paris was sent by his father, King Priam of Troy, on a mission to Greece. He came to Sparta and was received with great kindness by Menelaus.

But when Paris looked upon the face of beautiful Helen, Aphrodite whispered to him that this was the woman she had promised him for a wife.

Then Paris did a wicked thing. While Menelaus was away at war, he stole the beautiful Helen and departed in his ships for Troy.

When Menelaus returned and learned what had happened, he was filled with grief and rage. He at once sent messengers to Priam and demanded that Helen should be sent back to him. This the king of Troy refused to do.

Then Menelaus vowed to make war upon Troy and bring it to the dust. He called the kings of Greece to come to his aid. Remem-

bering the promises of Helen's suitors, he bade these mighty warriors now to fulfill their vows to defend her.

Odysseus

One of the greatest of the suitors who had bound themselves to Helen's defense was Odysseus. This noble king was famed alike for his brave deeds and for his wisdom, and now for many years he had ruled his island home in peace.

He had a fair young wife and a little son whom he loved dearly. When the message came from Menelaus, asking his help in the rescue of Helen, Odysseus was unwilling to go.

It seemed to him a wild and foolish undertaking. It had been prophesied that if he went on this journey, he should not return to his home for twenty years. He thought of the pain and trouble and warlike work of those twenty years and returned no answer to the message of Menelaus.

But the leaders of the Greeks were not willing to lose so good a warrior. When they received no reply to their bidding, Menelaus and some of his companions set out to journey to the land of Odysseus and find out the reason.

Odysseus, hearing that they had come, determined to trick them by pretending that he was out of his mind. He put on his richest garments, yoked an ox and a colt to his plow, and went out into his fields. As he plowed, he scattered salt into the furrows, pretending that he thought it was seed.

But for once there was someone more clever than he. One of the followers of Menelaus suspected that Odysseus was playing a trick on them and decided to find out whether or not he was really mad. Just as the plow came opposite to him, the man suddenly took the baby son of Odysseus from the arms of the nurse and placed him on the ground directly in front of the ox. The sight of his son's danger made Odysseus forget his acting. He turned the plow aside and sprang forward to save his child. So Menelaus and his companions knew that the madness of Odysseus was a trick.

After this, Odysseus could no longer find any excuse for remaining at home. But though he had been unwilling to set out upon this war, he proved one of its greatest heroes. Indeed, it was not very long after this that he was able to do the Greeks a great service.

The Godlike Achilles

One of the fairest of the Greek youths was Achilles, the son of Peleus and the sea-nymph at whose wedding the apple of discord had fallen. His godlike beauty was like that of Thetis, his mother, and he had the warlike strength of his kingly father. He was trained with the greatest care in all manly exercises and showed greater strength and valor than any other youths of the land.

When Helen was stolen away and all Greece rose in arms to rescue her, Thetis was sad at heart. Zeus himself had told her that if Achilles went to this war, he would never return alive. Thetis knew well that this was true. She herself was immortal because she was a sea-nymph and belonged to the race of the gods, but Achilles was in part mortal.

When he was a baby, his mother had desired to make him immortal. She had carried him to the river under the world and had bathed him there. The water of this river had such power that whatever it touched was safe from any mortal harm forever.

All the world knew that Achilles had been bathed in this stream, and they believed him immortal. But Thetis knew that there was one tiny spot upon his heel which had not been touched by the water. It was the place where she had held him when she dipped him into the stream. She had forgotten to bathe it until she had returned to the world once more, and it was then too late. This one spot upon his heel, she knew, would cause his death.

Before the first clash of arms sounded throughout Greece, Thetis had hurried Achilles away to an island across the sea. There she hid him, dressed as a girl, among the daughters of the king of that island.

Now a certain wise man had told the Greek leaders that their war would not be successful unless the youthful Achilles accompanied

them to Troy. The leaders, therefore, sought Achilles at his father's court, but he was not to be found. Odysseus then undertook to discover where the youth was hidden.

At length in some way he found out what Thetis had done, and straightway he set out for the island. The boy was so well disguised that no one could have guessed that he was not a girl, but Odysseus devised a plan to discover him.

Dressing himself as a traveling merchant with trinkets for sale, he gained entrance to the king's garden where the maidens were playing. They all examined his wares eagerly, except one tall maiden who seemed to care little for them. Odysseus noted her keenly and determined to test her further. Bringing out from his pack some splendid pieces of armor, he held them up in the sunlight. At once the tall maiden came forward and handled the shining arms with delight.

Odysseus was now certain that this was the youth whom he sought. He made known his errand and called upon Achilles to join the Greeks in their war against the Trojans. The boy, weary of his soft and easy life, joyfully agreed to accompany them.

He returned at once to his father's court to make ready. His mother, telling him of Zeus's prophecy, tearfully begged him to remain at home, but Achilles could not be moved. He girded on his shining armor and prepared himself for battle. Calling to him his father's trusted warriors, he bade them make ready to go with him. They answered his summons with glad hearts, for they were proud to accompany this youth who was destined to perform mighty deeds.

But Thetis watched them depart in their great ships with a heavy heart. She knew that never again should her godlike son return to the land of his father.

WORDS TO WATCH

Troy	Menelaus	discord	wrath
foretold	Odysseus	strife	chanced
King Priam	Achilles	abide	vowing
prophecy	immortal	trinkets	girded
Sparta	Thetis	mortal	

QUESTIONS

1. Why did the golden apple cause so much trouble?
2. Why did the king of Sparta send his army against Troy?
3. How did Paris become a shepherd?
4. Which goddess did Paris say was the fairest? Why?
5. Who was Odysseus?
6. How did Odysseus find Achilles?

How Theseus Lifted the Stone

Charles Kingsley

Once upon a time there was a princess in Troezene whose name was Aithra. She had one fair son, named Theseus, the bravest lad in all the land. Aithra never smiled but when she looked at him, for her husband had forgotten her and lived far away. She used to go up to the mountain above Troezene, to the temple of Poseidon, and sit there all day looking out across the bay. When Theseus was full fifteen years old, she took him up with her to the temple and into the thickets of the grove which grew in the temple-yard. She led him to a tall plane-tree, and there she sighed, and said, "Theseus, my son, go into that thicket, and you will find at the plane-tree foot a great flat stone; lift it, and bring me what lies underneath."

Then Theseus pushed his way in through the thick bushes. And searching among their roots, he found a great flat stone, all overgrown with ivy and moss. He tried to lift it, but he could not. And he tried till the sweat ran down his brow from heat, and the tears from his eyes for shame, but all was of no avail. And at last he returned and said, "I have found the stone, but I cannot lift it; nor do I think that any man could in all Troezene."

Then she sighed, and said, "The gods wait long; but they are just at last. Let it be for another year. The day may come when you will be a stronger man than lives in all Troezene."

Then she took him by the hand, and went into the temple and prayed, and came down again with Theseus to her home.

And when a full year was past, she led Theseus up again to the temple, and bade him lift the stone, but he could not.

Then she sighed, and said the same words again, and went down, and came again the next year; but Theseus could not lift the stone then, nor the year after; and he longed to ask his mother the meaning of that stone, and what might lie underneath; but her face was so sad that he had not the heart to ask.

So he said to himself, "The day shall surely come when I will lift that stone, though no man in Troezene can."

And in order to grow strong he spent all his days in wrestling, and boxing, and hurling, and taming horses, and hunting the boar and the bull, and following goats and deer among the rocks, till upon all the mountains there was no hunter so swift as Theseus. He killed Phaia, the wild sow, which wasted all the land, and all the people said, "Surely the gods are with the lad."

And when his eighteenth year was past, Aithra led him up again to the temple, and said, "Theseus, lift the stone this day, or never know who you are."

And Theseus went into the thicket, and stood over the stone, and tugged at it; and it moved. Then his spirit swelled within him, and he said, "If I break my heart in my body, it shall come up." And he tugged at it once more, and lifted it, and rolled it over with a shout.

And when he looked beneath it, on the ground lay a sword of bronze, with a hilt of glittering gold, and by it a pair of golden sandals. He picked them up, and burst through the bushes like a wild boar, and leapt to his mother, holding them high above his head.

But when she saw them, she wept long in silence, hiding her face in her shawl, and Theseus stood by her wondering, and wept also, he knew not why. And when she was tired of weeping, she lifted up her head, and laid her finger on her lips, and said, "Hide them in your bosom, Theseus my son, and come with me where we can look down upon the sea."

Then they went outside the sacred wall, and looked down over the bright blue sea, and Aithra said,

"Do you see this land at our feet?"

And he said, "Yes, this is Troezene, where I was born and bred."

And she said, "It is but a little land, barren and rocky, and looks toward the bleak northeast. Do you see that land beyond?"

"Yes, that is Attica, where the Athenian people dwell."

"That is a fair land and large, Theseus, my son; and it looks toward the sunny south. A land of olive-oil and honey, the joy of gods and men. For the gods have girdled it with mountains, whose veins are of pure silver, and their bones of marble white as snow. There the hills are sweet with thyme and basil, and the meadows with violets, and the nightingales sing all day in the thickets, by the side of ever-flowing streams. There are twelve towns well peopled, the homes of an ancient race. They sing all day, rejoicing in the beautiful sun. What would you do, son Theseus, if you were king of such a land?"

Then Theseus stood astonished, as he looked across the broad bright sea, and saw the fair Attic shore, and all the mountain peaks which surround Athens.

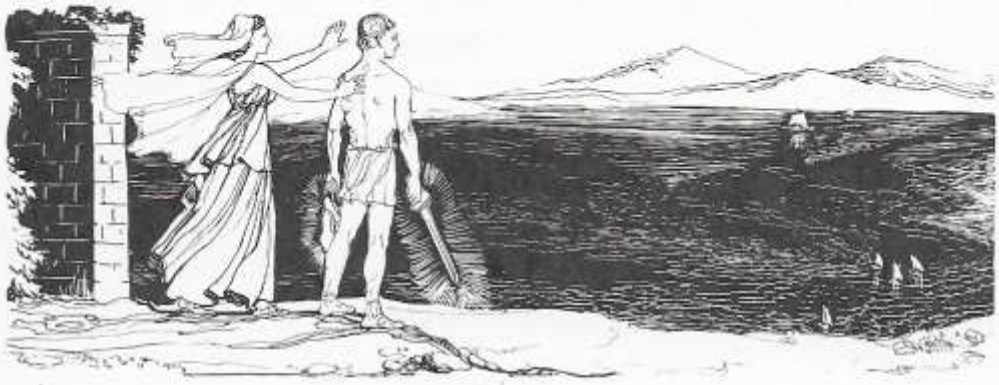
Then his heart grew great within him, and he said, "If I were king of such a land, I would rule it wisely and well in wisdom and in might, that when I died all men might weep over my tomb, and cry, 'Alas for the shepherd of his people!' "

And Aithra smiled and said, "Take then the sword and the sandals, and go to Aegeus, king of Athens, who lives on Pallas's hill, and say to him, 'The stone is lifted, but whose is the pledge beneath it?' Then show him the sword and the sandals and take what the Gods shall send."

But Theseus wept—"Shall I leave you, O my mother?"

But she answered, "Weep not for me. That which is fated must be. Full of sorrow was my youth, and full of sorrow my womanhood, and full of sorrow my old age will be. But I can bear them as I have borne the past. Yet I shall be avenged, and I shall hear the tale of Theseus's fame."

Then she kissed Theseus and wept over him, and went into the temple, and Theseus saw her no more.



WORDS TO WATCH

Theseus	bronze	Attica	Aegeus
Troezene	hilt	Athenian	Pallas's hill
Aithra	boar	veins	pledge
Poseidon	bleak	shepherd	avenged
thickets			

QUESTIONS

1. Why was it so important for Theseus to be able to lift the stone?
2. What did Theseus do to grow strong?
3. Where would Theseus become king?
4. How many years did Theseus try in vain before he finally lifted the stone?

An Uncomfortable Bed

Charles Kingsley

Equipped with the sword and sandals, Theseus sets out for his father's kingdom. This story describes one of the many adventures which Theseus met on his way.

As Theseus was skirting the valley along the foot of a high mountain, a very tall and strong man came down to meet him, dressed in rich garments. On his arms were golden bracelets, and round his neck a collar of jewels. He came forward, bowing courteously, held out both his hands and spoke, "Welcome, fair youth, to these mountains; happy am I to have met you! For what is greater pleasure to a good man than to entertain strangers? But I see that you are weary. Come up to my castle, and rest yourself awhile."

"I give you thanks," said Theseus; "but I am in haste to go up the valley."

"Alas! you have wandered far from the right way, and you cannot reach the end of the valley tonight, for there are many miles of mountain between you and it, and steep passes, and cliffs dangerous after nightfall. It is well for you that I met you, for my whole joy is to find strangers, and to feast them at my castle, and hear tales from them of foreign lands. Come up with me and eat the best of venison, and drink the rich red wine, and sleep upon my famous bed, of which all travelers say that they never saw the like. For whatsoever the stature of my guest, however tall or short, that bed fits him to a hair, and he sleeps on it as he never slept before."

He took hold of Theseus's hands, and would not let him go.

Theseus wished to go forward, but he was ashamed to seem rude to so hospitable a man; and he was curious to see that wondrous bed; and besides, he was hungry and weary. Yet he shrank from the man, he knew not why; for though his voice was gentle and fawning,

it was dry and husky, and though his eyes were gentle, they were dull and cold like stones. But he consented and went with the man up a glen which led from the road, under the dark shadow of the cliffs.

As they went up, the glen grew narrower, and the cliffs higher and darker, and beneath them a torrent roared, half seen between bare limestone rocks.

Around them was neither tree nor bush, while from the white peaks of the mountain the snow-blasts swept down the glen, cutting and chilling, till a horror fell on Theseus as he looked round at that doleful place. He said at last, "Your castle stands, it seems, in a dreary region."

"Yes; but once within it, hospitality makes all things cheerful. But who are these?" and he looked back, and Theseus also. Far below, along the road which they had left, came a string of laden beasts and merchants walking by them.

"Ah, poor souls!" said the stranger. "Well for them that I looked back and saw them! And well for me too, for I shall have the more guests at my feast. Wait awhile till I climb down this steep hill once more and call them, and we will eat and drink together the livelong night. Happy am I, to whom heaven sends so many guests at once!"

He ran back down the hill, waving his hand and shouting to the merchants, while Theseus went slowly up the steep path. But as he went up, he met an aged man, who had been gathering driftwood in the torrent bed. He had laid down his fagot in the road and was trying to lift it again to his shoulder. When he saw Theseus, he called to him and said, "O fair youth, help me up with my burden, for my limbs are stiff and weak with years."

Then Theseus lifted the burden on his back. The old man blessed him, and then looked earnestly at him and said, "Who are you, fair youth, and wherefore travel you this terrible road?"

"Who I am my parents know, but I travel this doleful road because I have been invited by a hospitable man, who promises to feast me and to make me sleep upon I know not what wondrous bed."

Then the old man clapped his hands together and cried:

"Know, fair youth, that you are going to torment and to death, for he who met you is a robber and a murderer of men. Whatsoever stranger he meets he lures him here to his death. And as for this bed of which he speaks, truly it fits all comers; yet none ever rose alive off it save me."

"Why?" asked Theseus, astonished.

"Because, if a man is too tall for it, he cuts his limbs till they are short enough, and if he is too short, he stretches his limbs till they are long enough. Only me he spared, seven weary years ago, for I alone of all fitted his bed exactly, so he spared me, and made me his slave. Once I was a wealthy merchant, and dwelt in a great city, but now I cut wood and draw water for him, the tormentor of all mortal men."

Then Theseus said nothing, but he ground his teeth together.

"Escape, then," said the old man, "for he will have no pity on thy youth. But yesterday he brought up hither a young man and a maiden and fitted them upon his bed. And the young man's hands and feet he cut off, but the maiden's limbs he stretched until she

died, and so both perished miserably—but I am tired of weeping over the slain.

"He is called Procrustes, the stretcher. Flee from him. Yet whither will you flee? The cliffs are steep, and who can climb them? And there is no other road."

But Theseus laid his hand upon the old man's mouth, and said, "There is no need to flee," and he turned to go down the pass.

"Do not tell him that I have warned you, or he will kill me by some evil death," the old man screamed after him down the glen.

As Theseus walked down, Procrustes came up the hill, and all the merchants with him, smiling and talking gayly. When he saw Theseus, he cried, "Ah, fair young guest, have I kept you too long waiting?"

But Theseus answered, "The man who stretches his guests upon a bed and hews off their hands and feet, what shall be done to him, when right is done throughout the land?"

Then the countenance of Procrustes changed, and his cheeks grew as green as a lizard, and he felt for his sword in haste. But Theseus leaped on him and cried, "Is this true, my host, or is it false?" and he clasped Procrustes around waist and elbow, so that he could not draw his sword.

"Is this true, my host, or is it false?"

But Procrustes answered never a word.

Then Theseus flung him from him, and lifted up his dreadful club, and before Procrustes could strike him, he had struck and felled him to the ground. And once again he struck him, and his evil soul fled forth, and went down into the depths squeaking, like a bat into the darkness of a cave.

Then Theseus stripped Procrustes of his gold ornaments, and went up to his house, and found there great wealth and treasure, which he had stolen from the passers-by.

And he called the people of the country, whom Procrustes had robbed, and divided the treasure among them, and went down the mountain and away.

WORDS TO WATCH

skirting	rude	glen	laden
weary	wondrous	torrent	Procrustes
travelers	fawning	dreary	clasped

QUESTIONS

1. What made Theseus shrink away from the strong man?
2. How did Theseus find out about the danger in the strong man's
3. castle?
   What did Theseus do with the wealth he found in the castle?
4. What was the name of the evil man?

We cannot do evil to others without doing it to ourselves.

Desmahis

Written in March

William Wordsworth

The cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun;
The oldest and the youngest
Are at work with the strongest;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising;
There are forty feeding like one!
Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill;
The plough-boy is whooping anon, anon,
There's joy in the mountains;
There's life in the fountains;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
The rain is over and gone!