

## Proverbs in Fables

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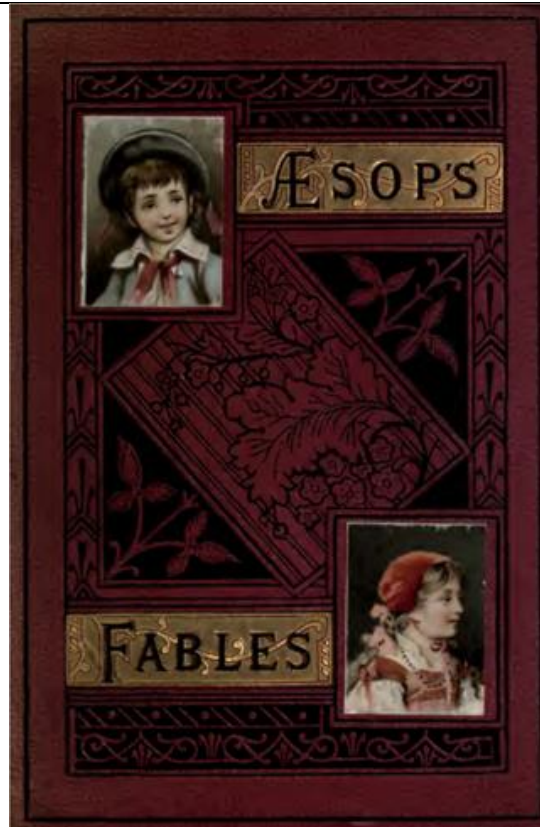
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*Three Hundred Aesop's Fables* by George Fyler Townsend

Courtesy: [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Three\\_Hundred\\_%C3%86sop%27s\\_Fables](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Three_Hundred_%C3%86sop%27s_Fables)

### Abstract

I would like to present an analysis of proverbs in the select fables of **Aesop**. The specific steps of analysis start with identifying the proverb stated in the fable and describing the context of the fable in which the proverb is used; hence the contextualization of proverbs is pointed out by commenting on it. The third step comments on the proverbiality of the proverb statements. It

presents the different constituents that make them stand out as proverbs. Whether the elements in the proverb relate to mythological, cultural, traditional, environmental, or religious aspects is stated. The final step presents the implications that proverbs convey through the fables. What is expressed through the fables and proverbs is interpreted to arrive at a universally applicable moral lesson.

**Keywords:** Aesop, Fables, Moral Lesson, Proverbs

### **Selection of Proverbs for Analysis**

I selected the Proverbs in the select fables based on the various contexts they refer to. These contexts are mythological, social, ecological, and religious. They represent each story about mythical, cultural, traditional, environmental, or religious aspects of society and the overall effect of proverbs on the story.

The method of analysis of proverbs in Aesop's select fables applies the following steps.

**Step one** includes the identification of the proverbs stated in the fables. There are some fables where proverbs are not explicitly stated, and there are certain fables in which proverbs are mentioned at the end. The stories having clearly stated proverbs are taken for analysis. This step uses different context criteria to identify the proverbs.

**Step two** describes the contextual fable in which the proverb is used; hence the contextualization of proverbs is pointed out by commenting on it.

The **third step** comments on the proverbiality of the proverb statements. It states the different constituents that make proverbs. Whether the elements in the proverb relate to mythological, cultural, traditional, environmental, or religious aspects is mentioned.

The **fourth step** states the implications that proverbs convey through the fables to arrive at a universally applicable impact of the proverbs and the stories.

### **Fables**

Fables are brief stories that have a moral message towards the end. The origin of the term *fable* can be found in the Latin word *fabula*; a word derived from the word *fari*, which implies the meaning "to talk". The description in the fable ordinarily incorporates animals that behave like people to exhibit the irrationalities among humans through a narrated story. A moral message is

expressed towards the end of the tale as an explanation that makes a logical impact on the story and the readers.

Proverbs frequently demonstrate their creativity while making a context-oriented effect on the story's readers. Therefore, investigating proverbs from fables gives us a profound understanding of the relevant incorporation of linguistic capabilities of both -- the author and the reader. Moreover, proverbs in the fables improve the overall literary effect of the story.

The proverbs utilized in Aesop's fables teach ethics with the help of the story narrated before them. An effort is made to point out the overall effect the fables achieve with the use of proverbs in them. I also investigate how the use of proverbs in the story enriches the literary qualities of the fables.

Two books are selected for the analysis of the stories of Aesop. The books include similar stories, yet their English translations provide different effects. The books include *Three Hundred Aesop's Fables* by Fyler Townsend and *Aesop's Fables* from planet ebook.com. However, in this article, fables from the volume *Aesop's Fables* by Fyler Townsend are used as the data. I hope to present additional fables from the source *Aesop's Fables* from <https://www.planetebook.com/> in my next article.

### **Proverbs from *Three Hundred Aesop's Fables***

**“The tyrant will always find a pretext for his tyranny”** (Townsend 32).

The above proverb finds its place at the end of the tale *The Wolf and the Lamb*. The tale portrays the narrative of a devilish wolf and an unfortunate lamb. A wolf found a lamb in the forest. The wolf wanted to eat the lamb, but he could not find a reason to form the grounds on which he could devour him. Thus, he states a few reasons which made him eat the lamb. He informs the lamb that he was offended last year by him. The lamb tells him that he was not yet born at that time. The wolf states one more reason by saying that the lamb nibbled on his property, to which the lamb said he had not tasted the grass as he had been fed on his mother's milk. The wolf again

said that he drank the water from his well, to which again the lamb explained to him that his mother had fed him on her milk.

Although giving such honest explanations, the wolf ate the lamb, saying that regardless of how true the lamb was, he could not stay empty stomach.

The proverb relates to the mythical context. The constituents which make it a proverb are “a tyrant”, “a pretext”, and “the tyranny”. The proverb suggests that regardless of how honest you are, a despot will continuously find excuses for your honesty. Subsequently, the proverb proposes that it is futile to give legitimate explanations to a tyrant because no reason saves the remorselessness of a dictator.

**“Fine weather friends are not worth much”** (Townsend 35).

The proverb is from *The Swallow and the Crow*, which tells the story of a swallow and a crow arguing over their feathers. The crow ended their argument by saying that the feathers of a swallow are good in spring, but his feathers protect him against the winter.

The proverb used in the story is made out of two parts - “fine weather friends” and “worth nothing”. It suggests that the person who accompanies you only during your good time is not worth making a friend as s/he leaves as soon as the hard time begins.

The proverb is related to the story in the sense that the crow announces his supremacy over the swallow by stating that his feathers protect him against the winter as if the feathers of the swallow don't. The proverb uses an environmental setting to suggest the message.

**“The loiterer often imputes delay to his more active friend”** (Townsend 36).

The story, *The Traveller and his Dog*, uses the above proverb. The story starts with a traveller getting ready to embark on a journey. As he was about to go out of his house, he saw his dog stretching out outside the home. He scolds his dog for not being ready to go out. The dog tells him that he is already prepared and waiting for him to get prepared.

The proverb aptly creates an effect instantly correlating the things like the loiterer with the traveller and the more active friend with the dog. “The loiterer”, “attribution of delay”, and “more active friend” are the constituent parts of the proverb. It suggests that the person who wastes most of the time always blames others for the delay. The proverb makes the story memorable as it directly correlates with the story’s characters. The proverb relates to social context.

**“If you were foolish enough to sing all the summer, you must dance supperless to bed in the winter”** (Townsend 36).

The proverb is used at the end of the story *The Ants and The Grasshopper*. In winter, the ants ate the dry grains gathered in summer. The grasshopper came to them requesting some food. The ants asked him why he didn’t gather food in summer to survive in winter. The grasshopper explained to them that he was busy spending his energy singing all the time in summer. The ants told him that he was fool enough to waste his time singing throughout the entire summer, and now there was no food to survive on.

The proverb is associated with the ecological context as it helps us understand that we must be ready for harsh times well ahead of time. The components of the proverb are “to sing in the summer”, and “be supperless in winter”. It gives us the ethical illustration that we ought to be ready for times of need. It suggests that we should be prepared for future hardships well in advance; otherwise, we may have no other choice than to express our regret.

**“Like will draw like”** (Townsend 38).

The story of *The Charcoal-Burner and The Fuller* makes use of the above proverb. The charcoal burner proposes the fuller to be his neighbour as their expenses will be reduced if they live together. The fuller rejected the idea by saying that his work is to make the clothes white, and the charcoal burner’s work is to burn charcoal which makes everything around black. Hence, the arrangement will be impossible.

The use of the proverb at the end of the story passes on the message that in the company of a charcoal burner, we expect only soot of the charcoal to be spread all over. The proverbial

elements of the proverb are “like” and “draw” which denote the profession of charcoal burner and its results.

The proverb suggests that a person’s company gives the same experiences to people in the accompaniment. In the story’s context, the proverb explains that the charcoal burner and the fuller cannot stay together as the black dust of charcoal puts a black stain on the fuller’s clothes. As a result, the story cites the proverb.

The overall impact of the proverb in the background of the story denotes that a man is known by the company he keeps. It contradicts the idea that opposite poles attract each other. It symbolically states that charcoal dust is the result of charcoal burning. Similarly, things have the same results.

**“Self-help is the best help”** (Townsend 40).

*Hercules and The Waggoner* is the fable that uses the above proverb. The tale expounds on the story of a carter who was driving his waggon in a village when a wheel of his waggon sank in the furrow. Looking at the wheel, the carter cried for help and appealed to Hercules. Hercules appeared before him and told him to put some effort into getting the rotation of the waggon out of the furrow. He further advised him to help himself rather than ask for someone else’s help. If he fails to help himself, he has nothing but to cry for help in vain. The proverb uses the elements “self-help” and “the best help”.

The proverb belongs to the mythological context as it mentions the name of Hercules. In the context of the fable, the carter is advised to help himself rather than to ask others for help. In a general context, the proverb suggests that one must help himself rather than expect others to help. As the proverb suggests, the story includes the message that the carter must start helping himself rather than calling others as it is the best way to get help. At the story’s backdrop, the proverb suggests that beginning to help ourselves is the best way to solve the problem. It refers to the other proverb-charity begins at home.

**“No arguments will give courage to the coward”** (Townsend 42).

The proverb is exemplified at the end of the story *The Fawn and his Mother*. There was a baby deer and his mother grazing in the forest. The baby deer asked his mother for what good reason she was so scared of dogs even though she was bigger, quicker, and more used to running faster than any of the dogs, and also had the horns for her safety. She told her child that whatever he said was true, yet she became afraid of the simple bark of the dogs.

The proverb is associated with the mythical context. The components that make this proverb are “the arguments”, “the courage”, and “the coward”. A weakling, however aware of his powers, remains a coward. However, it reminds us that a weakling is powerful enough to fight others and remains a coward forever.

**“Pleasure bought with pains, hurts”** (Townsend 42).

The proverb is used in the fable *The Flies and The Honey Pot*, which tells the story of a honey jar that was upset in the house and the flies attracted to it. The flies could not help themselves and started cramming honey down but forgot that their feet got stuck in the honey. They tried to free themselves, but they could not free themselves and suffocated to death. They regretted that they were foolish to put their life at risk just for the sake of some honey. The proverb is made of social elements “pleasure”, “pains”, and “hurting”.

The story and the proverb match each other exactly as the attraction of flies to honey explains the pleasure of honey accompanied by the resulting pain which leads to their death. The story’s context and the proverbial explanation leave a literary impact on the story. The proverb suggests that seemingly pleasurable things might result in painful experiences. As the sweetness of honey made the flies happy, they forgot the danger of being trapped in the sticky honey.

**“The value is in the worth, not in the number”** (Townsend 42).

The fable of *The Lioness* makes use of the above proverb. There was a dispute among the animals in a forest as to who deserved the credit for giving birth to the most significant number of babies at birth. All the animals went to a lioness to settle the dispute and asked her how many babies she gave birth to at one time. On hearing this question, the lioness laughed and said she gave birth to only one cub, but he was far superior to other animals in the forest.

The story indicates that quantity does not matter, but quality does. The same message is reflected in the above proverb, which uses a mythical context.

The proverb is made of three essential components- “the value”, “the worth”, and “the number”. The proverb correlates appropriately with the story’s context as the importance of value is compared in terms of worth rather than number. No doubt, the lion is far superior to any other animal in the forest. Similarly, the proverb highlights the significance of value over number in this fable and proverb.

**“The greatest benefits will not bind the ungrateful”** (Townsend 43).

The story of *The Farmer and The Snake* makes use of the above proverb as the backdrop of the story. The farmer found a snake stiff with cold in the winter season. Upon seeing the snake stiff, the farmer took pity on him and took him into his house. After getting warmth, the snake showed his nature and bit the farmer with a fatal wound, of which the farmer died. He repented that he had received the price of being nice to a crook as the snake bit him at his death.

The proverb relates to the social context in which people come across such people who are ungrateful to the person who helps the most. The proverb is made of “the greatest benefits”, “bind”, and “the ungrateful”. The environmental context of the story makes the proverb fit into the story. The story shows the relationship between the benefits the snake got from the farmer and the ungratefulness shown by the snake. Similarly, the fable points out that ungrateful people will never remember the favours they received. The context of the story and the proverb depict the message.

**“One story is good, till another is told”** (Townsend 43).

The proverb is taken from the fable *The Man and The Lion*. The man and the lion were travelling together, and soon, they began boasting about their respective superiorities. They passed by a statue that showed a man strangling a lion as they walked. Looking at the statue, the man boasted his strength as the man in the statue strangled the lion. On this, the lion said that a man like you makes the statue, and if we had the skills to make the statue, it would have been the other way. The man would have been under the lion’s paw.



The proverb takes the context of a general social situation to match the message with the story. The statue is compared with a story representing one side of the situation. The proverb is made of “one story”, “good”, “another story”, and “told”.

There is a reference to two stories in the proverb, what the statue in the story shows is one story, and what the lion proposed is another. In this context, the co-relation of the first part of the proverb sounds acceptable to the man in the story; when the lion explains the other story to the person, it explains the proverb’s meaning. Until the second story is told, the first story seems good.

The proverb creates an impact through the context of the story. The proverb becomes a miniature story in itself.

**“Birds of a feather flock together”** (Townsend 44).

The proverb is from the fable *The Farmer and The Stork*, in which a farmer harvested his farm for new crops and laid down a net to stop the birds from picking up the seeds. He caught a few cranes and a stork. The stork begged the farmer to release him as his leg was broken, and his feathers were different from the crane’s feathers. He implored the farmer that he loved his parents and requested them to release him. But the farmer laughed at this and refused to release the stork. He said that the stork came along with these cranes, and he was caught, so he could not release him.

The proverb used at the fable’s end fits into the story’s context. Whether you are a crane or a stork, you will all be the same. The proverb is made of “birds”, “feather”, and “flock together”. In the context of the story, the proverb suggests that it is the nature of birds to pick up the seeds irrespective of their differences. So, the farmer refused to release the stork merely based on the difference between him and the cranes. They all came there to pick up the farmer’s seeds.

The proverb suggests the message through the story that people with the same intention gather together irrespective of their differences.

**“Don’t make much ado about nothing”** (Townsend 44).

The proverb is associated with a short fable called *The Mountain in Labour* which tells the story of a disturbed mountain. It made great noises and grumbled. All the people in the area feared

a tremendous natural calamity, but a tiny mouse came out of the hill to their surprise. The proverb is made of “don’t make”, “much ado”, and “nothing”.

The proverb fits into the story’s context as the mountain was restless just because of a tiny mouse. All the people feared a great calamity, but the mountain’s overexcitement resulted from a little mouse. It suggests that overreaction to small things is not appropriate. The mountain was grumbling just because of a small rat. The proverb affects the story’s context as the mountain exaggerates something tiny. Overall, the proverb suggests that we should not make issues of more minor things.

**“Look before you leap”** (Townsend 46).

The fable of *The Fox and The Goat* makes use of the above proverb. The fable tells the story of a fox who fell into a well. A goat came to the well in search of water and saw the fox trapped at the bottom of the well. The goat asked the fox whether the water in the well was good enough to drink or not. The cunning fox praised the water in the best possible manner, which lured the goat into getting into the well. Then the fox revealed the difficulty they got into. The fox made a plan to get out of the well. He asked the goat to put her front legs on the wall of the well, and he would climb on her and get out of the well. Then, he would help her to get out. The thoughtless goat agreed with the fox’s idea, and the fox climbed out of the well and ran away. When the goat asked him to get her out of the well, the fox made fun of her and told her that she should have thought of a way of getting out of the well before entering it.

The proverb is made of “look before”, and “you leap”. It relates to the story appropriately, as the goat should have thought before getting into the well. In the context of the story, the fox got into the well without thinking of getting out of it. In the same manner, the goat got into the well. It is a cautious reminder that we should think before we try something. The proverb becomes significant in the context of the story and in general.

**“Change of habit cannot alter Nature”** (Townsend 46).

The story of *The Raven and The Swan* illustrates the above proverb. The fable tells the story of a raven and a swan. The raven desired to have the colour of a swan; hence, he changed his house to that of the swan, thinking that the swan might be washing himself in a different kind of

water to have the white colour. He left his place where he got his food and started living near a pond where the swan lived. He washed himself in the water many times, but nothing changed his colour. The raven perished in the attempt to become as white as the swan.

The proverb is made of “change of habit”, and “cannot alter nature”. In the story’s context, the raven tried to change his habits but failed to change his colour to the swan’s. The proverb suggests that the change in habit does not bring the desired change in the true nature. The correlation between the proverb and the story brings out the above message.

**“Zeal should not outrun discretion”** (Townsend 46).

The above proverb is taken from the fable *The Thirsty Pigeon*. The pigeon was very thirsty. She was so dehydrated that she saw a painting of a goblet of water and flew towards it very fast. She dashed against the picture so hard that she fell on the floor with a broken wing. Later she was caught by a bystander. The proverb aptly relates to the story as the pigeon was very zealous to get the water, but her zeal made her make a wrong decision, and a person caught her in addition to an injury. The proverb is made of “zeal”, and “outrun discretion”. The pigeon’s zeal for water blocked her thought process as she could not recognize the painting of the water goblet.

Thus, the proverb suggests that well-thought-out enthusiasm helps us make the right decision, and overenthusiasm makes us make wrong decisions. The correlation between the proverb and the story creates an effect mutually as the proverb explains the message in short, and the fable helps us understand the proverb in its context.

**“Those who suffer most cry out the least”** (Townsend 47).

The fable of *The Oxen and The Axle-Trees* uses the above proverb. A team of oxen dragged a cart in a village lane when the axle trees made a loud noise. The oxen turned to the axle trees and asked why they were making so much noise as they were shouldering all the axle tree’s burden. The oxen said that they should cry out loud and not the axle trees. The proverb makes use of “those”, “who suffer most”, and “cry out the least”. The proverb is associated correctly with the story’s context as the oxen laboriously drag the load in the cart, and they do their job silently, but the axle trees make most of the noise. The oxen suffer most in the story, and they make no noise. The story also suggests another proverb that those who suffer less cry out the most. The proverb

explains the message of the story in brief. Once the story is heard and the proverb is quoted, the complete meaning of the proverb gets explained; on the other hand, the proverb's message becomes clear from the story.

**“Misfortune tests the sincerity of friends”** (Townsend 49).

The proverb is quoted at the end of the fable *The Bear and The Two Travellers*. The fable tells the story of two fellow travellers going through a forest, and suddenly they saw a bear coming towards them. One of the travellers quickly climbed a tree, and the other could not climb a tree. As the other person saw the bear approaching nearer, he slept flat on the ground like a dead man. The bear came near him but thought that the man must be dead and did not touch him. He sniffed his body near his ears and went away. When the bear went far away, the other person climbed down from the tree and asked the person lying on the ground what the bear said in his ear. The other person answered that the bear warned him not to travel with a friend who deserts him at the time of danger. The proverb is made of “misfortune”, “tests”, and “the sincerity of friends”.

The proverb fits into the context of the story as the misfortune of the travellers revealed the sincerity of a friend. The bear approached the travellers, and one of them deserted the other fellow traveller. The approaching bear became the test of the honesty of the person who could climb a tree. The proverb passes on the message through the fable that difficult situation reveals the genuineness of other persons.

**“Harm seek, harm find”** (Townsend 50).

The proverb belongs to the fable called *The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing*. The story of the fable is about a wolf who chooses to get his meal every day by disguising himself under the skin of a sheep. The wolf used to go in the herd of sheep, and the shepherd could not notice this. One evening the wolf was closed along with the sheep. The shepherd came in the night to arrange the food for the next day and picked up the wolf instead of the sheep. The wolf was killed, and thus the proverb above mentioned became realistic.

The proverb is made of “harm seek”, and “harm find” which means that the one who intends to harm others gets harmed in turn. The proverb in the story's context indicates that the wolf intended to harm the sheep, but he received harm in return as the shepherd killed him by

assuming that it was a sheep. The proverb becomes a one-sentence explanation of the fable as it becomes parallel to the story. The readers associate the proverb and the story immediately after reading both. In this way, the proverb and the fable become complementary.

**“Do not attempt to hide things which cannot be hidden”** (Townsend 50).

*The Goat and The Goatherd*'s fable uses the above proverb. The fable tells the story of a goatherd who has to bring a goat back to his herd. He sounded the horn in his hand, but it was of no use. As a result, he threw the horn, and it broke. He told the goat not to tell the master about the broken horn. The goat said that the horn itself was enough to inform the master about its damaged condition even though she remained silent. The proverb warns that truth cannot be hidden for too long.

The proverb is made of “attempt to hide things”, and “which cannot be hidden”. The proverb correlates appropriately in the context of the story as the goatherd tried to hide the broken condition of the horn and the goat told him that it cannot be hidden from the master. Even though the goat remains silent about the state of the horn, the master will know about it by looking at it. The proverb correspondingly reiterates the story briefly.

**“No one truly forgets injuries in the presence of him who caused the injury”**  
(Townsend 54).

The above proverb finds its place at the end of the tale *The Labourer and The Snake*. A snake made a hole close to the yard of a house. The son of the man living in the house died of the snake's bite. The person made up his mind to kill the snake when it came out. When the snake came out, the man attacked the snake's head in the furry but missed his target and cut down its tail. Frightened by the injured snake, the man put crumbs of bread and salt before the snake's hole as a token of harmony between them; however, the snake disproves that they may not find harmony among themselves and says that when they see one another, they would recall their losses. Thus, there would be no peace between them, and the story closes with the above proverb.

The components in the proverb are “the injured”, “forget the injury” and “the injurer”. The proverb is correlated with the social context. It conveys that nobody forgets the loss when the person responsible for it is encountered.

**“Little liberties are great offences”** (Townsend 54).

The fable of *The Lion, The Mouse, and The Fox* uses the above proverb. It tells the story of a lion sleeping in his den when a mouse ran over his body, waking him up. In a rage, the lion started searching for the mouse in every corner of the den. When a fox saw this, he said to the lion that he was such a giant lion and afraid of such a tiny mouse. Upon hearing this, the lion said that he was not afraid of the mouse but became angry with his familiarity and ill-breeding.

The proverb used in the fable is made of “little liberties”, and “great offences”. In the story, the lion gave little liberty to the mouse, and the lion became irritated. Hence, it suggested that providing little independence may become problematic. In the context of the story, the liberties enjoyed by the mouse became troublesome for the lion.

**“Honesty is the best policy”** (Townsend 55).

The above proverb is taken from the fable *The Horse and Groom*. A groom used to currycomb and regularly rub his horse but stole its oats and sold them for personal benefits. On seeing this, the horse said that if he wished to keep him in good condition, he should groom him less and feed him more.

The proverb used above is made of “honesty”, and “best policy”. The groom happened to be dishonest to the horse by stealing the oats and showing that he took utmost care by currycombing and rubbing him down. The groom was double-crossing the horse. On the one hand, he was currycombing and rubbing down the horse the whole day, and on the other hand, he was stealing his oats.

The proverb reflects the dishonesty of the groom towards the horse and the horse’s statement focuses on the hidden message of the proverb.

**“Do not be in a hurry to change one evil for another”** (Townsend 57).

The proverb is taken from the fable *The Oxen and The Butchers*. The fable is about the oxen who once decided to destroy all the butchers as they thought they were the destroyers of their race. All oxen were gathered to prepare for the task. Among all the oxen was one very old ox who said to others that it is true that the butchers kill them, but they do so very skillfully without causing

any unnecessary pain. If they kill all these butchers, there would be other unskillful butchers who may cause them real pain. Hence, he proposed to cancel the plan of destroying the butchers.

The above proverb corresponds to the fable as the oxen tried to kill the butchers but listened to the advice of the oldest ox. The proverb is made of “be in a hurry”, “to change one evil”, and “for another”. The oxen were in a hurry to kill the butchers, and the oldest ox told them that if they killed these butchers, there would be some worse butchers who would cause more trouble. The proverb advises not to change the current situation otherwise it would be terrible for them later. The proverb and the fable correspond to each other appropriately, as reading both the fable and the proverb gives a clear sense of understanding.

**“There is no believing a liar, even when he speaks the truth”** (Townsend 58).

The proverb is used at the end of a notable story called *The Shepherd’s Boy and Wolf* also called *The Boy who Cried Wolf*. A shepherd boy used to take his herd of cattle to the forest near his village. He enjoyed enticing others through lies. Whenever he grazed his cattle, he yelled for help as though a wolf was killing his cattle. In this manner, he ridiculed the people who came for his help ordinarily. However, there came a real wolf in the pack on one occasion. On checking out the wolf, he screamed for help. However, nobody believed him, and the wolf ate goats from his pack. The story’s message is cited as a proverb that nobody believes a frequent liar despite telling the truth.

The proverbial components in this proverb are “the liar”, “non-belief”, and “speaking the truth”. These three components make this proverb. The proverb is associated with the social context. It suggests that a liar is rarely believed even when he speaks the truth. Therefore, one must not make fun of people through lies; otherwise, no one extends a helping hand in their hour of need.

**“Notoriety is often mistaken for fame”** (Townsend 59).

The fable of *The Mischievous Dog* makes use of the above proverb. The story is about a dog who used to bite people’s heels without giving them any hint of his presence. The dog’s owner, being troubled, tied a bell to his neck to make people aware of his presence. The dog became proud of his bell and roamed all over the place. One of the old dogs asked him if he felt great about a bell

tied to his neck as it is not a thing to exhibit but a mark of dishonor. His owner has put this bell to his neck so that others avoid him as a bad dog.

The above proverb fits the context of the story as the dog assumed that the bell was a mark of honour and became proud of it, but he was mistaken about his assumption as the old dog revealed to him the actual purpose of the bell in his neck. The proverb is made of “notoriety”, and “mistaken for fame”. The bell on the neck of the dog was a mark of dishonor, and he assumed it was the symbol of popularity, but in reality, it was an alarm for others that the ill-mannered dog was there. Thus, the fable and the proverb in its context complement each other. The proverb runs parallel to the fable and vice versa.

**“Old friends cannot with impunity be sacrificed for new ones”** (Townsend 60).

The fable *The Goatherd and The Wild Goats* uses the above proverb. The story is about the goatherd and the wild goats who mixed up with the goats of the goatherd while being in the pasture. The next day there was snow, so the goatherd did not take the goats to the field but fed them in the fold. He offered little food to his old goats, but he provided more food to the wild goats to tempt them to stay. The next day when the goatherd took them to the meadows, the wild goats ran away. The goatherd reproached them for their ingratitude as, during the snow, he fed them more than his goats, but the wild goats said that if other goats come to the pack, he will do the same thing he did to his old goats. The proverb corresponds to the story as the goatherd forgot his goats and took extra care of the new ones.

The proverb is made of “old friends”, “cannot be sacrificed”, and “for new ones”. In the context of the story, the goatherd forgot the old goats as he tried to lure the new goats into staying with his herd. The goats understood his intentions and left the pack. The goatherd would have done the same to these goats when he had new goats in his herd. In short, the proverb gives a concise but complete sense of the story.

**“Those who seek to please everybody please nobody”** (Townsend 60).

The fable of *The Man and His Two Sweethearts* uses the above proverb. The story is of a middle-aged man who courted two women. One was younger than him, and the other was older than him. The older woman was ashamed to be courted by a younger man, so she decided to pick



up the black hair when he visited her. The younger woman was also enthusiastic about removing every gray hair from his head. In pleasing both women, a day came when the man had no hairs left on his head. The above proverb, in short, describes the man's condition.

The proverb is made of "attempt to please everybody", and "pleasing nobody". The man in the story tried to please both the women and, in the end, he failed to satisfy both of them as he has become bald. Thus, in the story's context, the proverb explains the fable in short.

**"Evil companions bring more hurt than profit"** (Townsend 61).

The proverb is taken from the fable *The Sick Stag*. It is the story of a sick deer who was unable to move. Many fellow deer came to meet him and enquired about his health. They shared his food as well. Eventually, the deer died of hunger and not from his sickness. The proverb is made of "evil companions", "bring more hurt", and "than profit". The fellow deer who came to meet the sick deer shared his food and satisfied their hunger in the story. Their inquiry into the sick deer's health was of no use as they came to him but ate the food placed for him.

The proverb relates to the story appropriately as the other deer represent the evil companions, and their visit to the sick deer becomes a reason for his death.

**"Time and place often give the advantage to the weak over the strong"** (Townsend 64).

*The Kid and the Wolf's* fable uses the above proverb. The fable is of a kid standing on the roof of a house. He saw a wolf passing by and started mocking him. The kid taunted and insulted the wolf. The wolf listened to the kid and said that it is not you who is taunting but the roof on which you are standing.

The proverb appropriately points out the essence of the fable in short words. It is made of "time and place", "give the advantage", and "to the weak over the strong". In the story, the place at which the boy was standing was a roof that was not accessible to the wolf. It gave the boy the courage to taunt the wolf. According to the story, the roof became advantageous for the weak boy, and the strong wolf could do nothing but bear with the boy. This roof gave the weak kid an advantage to taunt the strong wolf. In this way, the proverb creates a parallel short explanatory statement for the fable. The proverb creates the overall impact of the story.

**“Pride goes before destruction”** (Townsend 66).

The proverb is from the fable *The Fighting Cocks and The Eagle*. The story is about two game cocks fighting on the issue of ruling the farmland. One of the cocks defeated the other, and the defeated cock hid in a corner. The victorious cock flew to a wall and crowed loudly. An eagle flew up in the sky, saw the cock, and pounced on him. The other cock ruled the farm later.

The proverb is made of “pride”, and “destruction”. The victorious cock took pride in defeating the other cock, but his overconfidence cost him his life. The pride in the victory over the other cock became the reason for the cock’s death. The cock in his pride forgot that there would be someone like an eagle who might catch him. The same thing happened, and the cock’s pride in his victory resulted in his death.

The proverb applies to the fable as the cock’s pride leads to destruction. Thus, the proverb suggests that we should not consider ourselves mighty as someone more powerful than us may become the reason for our downfall.

**“Avoid a remedy that is worse than the disease”** (Townsend 70).

The proverb is related to the fable of *The Hawk, The Kite and The Pigeons*. The pigeons once saw a kite hovering, and they approached a hawk to protect them from the kite. The hawk agreed to protect them, so the pigeons accepted him in their coop. But the remedy became worse for the pigeons as the hawk slew more pigeons in one day than the kite would have slain. In this way, the treatment became troublesome for the pigeons. The proverb is made of “a remedy”, and “worse than the disease”. The pigeons tried the remedy of a hawk to be safe from the danger of the kite, but the treatment became worse for them, which cost the lives of more pigeons.

The proverb focuses on the central message of the fable and creates a sense of wisdom.

**“Equals make the best friends”** (Townsend 71).

The proverb closes the fable *The Two Pots*, which tells the story of two pots carried out by a river stream. One pot was made of clay, and the other was made of brass. The earthenware pot told the brass pot not to come any closer to it or else it will break down into pieces. It also said that it would not come any closer to the brass pot.

The proverb at the fable's end is made of "equals", and "make the best friends". The two pots were made of different materials, and they did not match one another. Both were flowing in the water, and the earthenware pot became fragile, and the brass pot was not affected by the river's water. The contact between them might have caused the earthenware pot to break. Thus, the story and the proverb suggest that similar things become the best match. If the pots had been made of the same material, the result would have been the same. If both the pots had been made of clay, both would have been broken. If both pots had been made of brass, none would have been broken. Therefore, the proverb suggests that similar things become the best match for each other.

**"Better poverty without care, than riches with"** (Townsend 73).

The fable *The Fir Tree and The Bramble* ends with the above proverb. The fable is about the fir tree, which boasted its usefulness for roofs and house building. On listening to the boasting words of the fir tree, the bramble said that if it becomes aware of the axes and the saws that will cut it down, it shall wish to be bramble than a fir tree.

The proverb aptly signifies that being a bramble is better than being a fir tree that is always cut down for various purposes. The proverb is made of "better poverty without care", and "than riches with". The fir tree was proud of its usefulness but was always afraid of being cut down. The bramble does not worry about being cut down as it was not used for anything. The proverb shows the unusefulness of bramble as poverty without care of being cut down and the usefulness of fir tree as riches with the anxiety of being cut down. Thus, it suggests the message that poverty without care is better than riches with much care.

**"What's bred in the bone will stick to the flesh"** (Townsend 73).

The proverb finds its place at the end of the story, *The Æthiop*, in which the master of the new worker is informed that the worker's brown complexion is the aftereffect of the previous master's carelessness to the worker's tidiness. Thus, after arriving home, he made every effort to clean the worker and change the colour of his skin; however, the colour of his skin did not change.

The proverb is correlated with the social context. The proverb has two components "bred in the bone" and "stick to the flesh". It gives us the message that permanent things cannot be changed.

**“Harm hatch, harm catch”** (Townsend 75).

The proverb is used at the end of the fable *The Mouse, The Frog, and The Hawk*. It is the story of a frog and a mouse who became friends. One day, the frog intended to do a mischievous act on the mouse. He tied his one leg with the mouse’s tail, and they roamed on the meadows. Gradually, the frog took the mouse near the pond and dragged the mouse into the water. The frog swam in the water, but the mouse suffocated to death. The mouse died of drowning. The hawk saw the dead body of the mouse floating on the surface of the water and pounced on it. The mouse’s tail was still tied to the leg of the frog, which made the frog fly away with the mouse, and thus, the frog was killed by the hawk.

The proverb aptly relates to the fable as the frog intended to cause harm to the mouse, and in return, he received the same. The proverb is made of “harm hatch” and “harm catch,” which means the act of the frog returned to him in the same manner. The harmful intention of the frog towards the mouse resulted in the deadly fate of the frog. Thus, the proverb at the fable’s end reminds the story again.

**“Hypocritical speeches are easily seen through”** (Townsend 75).

The proverb is related to the fable *The Wolf and The Sheep*. It is the story of a wolf seriously injured by the dogs. He was unable to move and remained in his den. A sheep passed by, and he asked the sheep to fetch some water as he was thirsty. If she brings her water, he will get his meat. The sheep realized his intention and said that if she brought him the water, he would make her get the meat as well. The proverb shows the intentions of the wolf through his hypocritical statement.

The proverb is made of “hypocritical speeches”, and “easily seen through”. The wolf intended to get his meat from the sheep, so he used sugarcoated words, but the sheep was clever enough to see his intentions and thus protected herself. Thus, the hypocritical intention of the wolf was seen by the sheep. The proverb suggests that one should be aware of the evil intentions of others when they speak well.

**“The memory of a good deed lives”** (Townsend 75).

The fable of *The Old Woman and The Wine-Jar* makes use of the above proverb. The fable is about an older woman who found an old wine jar. The jar was empty, but it still had the aroma

of the wine it contained before. The woman repeatedly took the jar's smell as it gave her an aromatic experience. She said that the wine must have been very nice as it left such a pleasing fragrance.

The proverb states that the memory of the excellent wine remains forever in the jar. The proverb is made of "the memory", "good deed", and "lives". The wine was delicious, and it left behind the fragrance. Its memory has been constant in the jar. The proverb relates to a part of the fable as the jar of wine contained good wine, and its memory lived forever in the jar.

**"The least outlay is not always the greatest gain"** (Townsend 77).

The above proverb is taken from the fable *The Widow and The Sheep*. The fable is about a poor widow and her sheep. At the time of shearing, the widow decided to shear the sheep by herself to save money. She clipped the sheep unskillfully. The widow sheared the sheep's flesh with the wool, which caused pain. The sheep asked the widow what difference her flesh would make in the wool. If she wanted to kill her, she should hand her over to the butcher, or if she wanted the wool, there was a shearer who would shear her skillfully without hurting her.

In the context of the fable, the proverb states that the widow tried to save her money by shearing the sheep by herself, but it cost the sheep pain, which is a kind of loss. The proverb is made of "least outlay", and "not always the greatest gain". The proverb states the widow's attempt to save the money, but, in her attempt, she hurts the sheep, which does not prove to be the greatest gain.

**"Those who do not know their right place must be taught it"** (Townsend 77).

The proverb is used at the end of the fable *The Playful Ass*. It is the story of a donkey who climbed on a rooftop and friskily broke the tiling. The house owner went after him and dragged him down, beating him with a wooden stick. The donkey argued with the owner, saying that he saw a monkey doing the same thing yesterday, and the owner was laughing at it as if it amused him.

The proverb relates to the fable because the donkey is not like a monkey who amuses others. The donkey did not know his right place. He tried to be a monkey, but the owner had to show him his right place. The proverb is made of "those", "who do not know their right place",

and “must be taught it”. The donkey in the fable was ignorant about his place and tried to behave like a monkey. While doing so, he broke the tiling, which the monkey did not; hence the owner showed him his proper place. The proverb relates to this incident of the fable.

**“Children are not to be blamed for the faults of their parents”** (Townsend 79).

The above proverb is used at the end of the fable *The Two Dogs*. There were two dogs of a master. One dog was trained to help his master in work, and the other was trained to look after the house. Whenever the master came home after a good day’s work, he gave the house watchdog a significant amount of coddling. On seeing this, the other dog argued with the house watchdog that it was awful to enjoy without making much effort. The house watchdog said to the other dog not to blame him but to the master who has not trained him to help in work and depend on the exertions of others. The above proverb rightly elucidates the fable. The dogs are directly compared with the children, and the master is with the parents.

The proverb is made of “children are not to be blamed”, and “for the faults of their parents”. The other dog blamed the house watchdog in the story as he enjoyed his efforts. According to the house watchdog, it was the fault of the master who did so. Thus, the proverb corresponds to the fable.

**“Might makes right”** (Townsend 80).

The fable *The Wild Ass and The Lion* uses the above proverb. The story is about a wild donkey and a lion who are allied to hunt the beasts of the forest. They both agreed to use their respective strengths. The lion’s strength and donkey’s speed caught many prey. When the distribution of the share came, the lion decided to share the hunts in three portions, as the first portion went to the lion being the king. The lion withheld the second portion with him for being a companion to the donkey, and for the third portion, the lion threatened the donkey to leave, or he would be in trouble.

The proverb pertains to the last sentence of the fable as the lion used his power to make things right for himself. The proverb is made of “might”, and “makes right”. The lion’s power made him get all the prey. Though the proverb relates to the last part of the story, it depends on

the overall fable as the lion is mighty and the donkey is not. Thus, it elucidates that power makes things suitable for the powerful.

**“We must make friends in prosperity if we would have their help in adversity”**  
(Townsend 82).

The proverb is used at the end of the fable *The Sick Kite*. It tells the story of a sick-to-death kite who requested his mother to invoke gods not to let him die. The mother asked which gods she should invoke as the kite had stolen the offerings to the gods. The kite’s act of stealing the offerings to the god was of no help when he was on his deathbed. The proverb suggests that the kite did not do good things when he was well. At the time of his death, he sought the help of gods, which could not be bestowed as he fetched the offerings when he was well.

The proverb is made of “make friends in prosperity,” and “seek help in adversity”. Thus, the proverb enunciates that in times of prosperity, we should make friends who will be helpful in times of difficulty. The proverb precisely points out the kite’s act of unfriendliness and his adverse condition when no help is expected from others. Overall, the proverb creates an effect on the story briefly. The proverb statement creates a flashback of the fable in mind.

**“It is better for us to make friends, than to become the food of Crows or Vultures”**  
(Townsend 82).

The above proverb is used at the end of the fable *The Lion and The Boar*. The fable tells the story of a lion and a boar who were very thirsty and both came to a well. They began arguing as to who would drink the water first. They fought furiously over the issue. When they stopped to catch their breath, they saw vultures waiting for them to finish so that they could feed themselves on the first one who would die. The lion and the boar decide to make friends rather than become their food by looking at the vultures. The proverb is made of “make friends”, “than to become”, and “the food for crows and vultures”. The fight between the lion and the boar was unfriendly, which may have benefited the vultures, but soon the lion and the boar made friends and avoided being the food of vultures.

Hence, the proverb suggests that personal fights might be more beneficial for others than those fighting.

**“The more honour the more danger”** (Townsend 84).

The fable of *The Mice and The Weasels* uses the above proverb. The fable is about a fierce fight between mice and weasels. The weasels always won the war; hence, the mice thought over the cause of their defeat. They felt that they did not have any leader who disciplined them. They chose a mouse whose family descent, strength, and counsel were well known and dared to lead the group. The newly appointed mouse declared war against the weasels. The general of the Mice army bound straws around his head to be noticeable, but when the war began, all the mice ran and hid in the holes, and the general of the Mice army could not get into the holes, and he was thus captured and killed by the weasels.

The proverb proves the fact that with more honour comes more danger. The general of the Mice army was honored with the position in the group, but with the position, more responsibility and risk came. The proverb is made of “more honour”, and “more danger”. The proverb thus explains that honour accompanies danger.

**“False confidence often leads into danger”** (Townsend 85).

The fable *The Ass, The Cock, and The Lion* ends with the above proverb. The fable is about a donkey and a cock standing in the field when a hungry lion approaches them. The lion was about to pounce on the donkey when the cock crowed loudly, which the lion disliked, and he ran away. When the donkey saw that by merely the sound of the cock the lion was scared and ran away. This gave the courage to the donkey, and he ran behind the lion for a much longer distance. The lion then turned to the donkey, seized and killed him. The proverb aptly focuses on the foolishness of the donkey. The donkey had a false confidence that the lion was scared at the crowing of the cock, so why can't he scare the lion. Thus, he was put in danger due to his false confidence.

The proverb is made of “false confidence”, and “leads to danger”. The proverb statement creates a parallel to the fable. The entire fable is summed up in the proverb itself.

**“Some find fault with those things by which they are chiefly benefited”** (Townsend 85).

The proverb is taken from the story *The Rivers and The Sea*. Once, the rivers grumbled to the ocean that they are so pure and potable, yet for what reason does he make them undrinkable?



On conceiving that the rivers are accusing him of this, he requested that they should stop flowing to him. The story ends with the above proverb, which conveys that we ought not to find faults in a pointless explanation to bear an enormous misfortune.

The proverb is linked with the environmental context having the components “the things”, “the faults” and “the benefits”. The proverb’s moral message is that we should not cry over little blame to lose significant advantages. If we express our contempt over minor things, we may fall into grave difficulties.

**“To be well prepared for war is the best guarantee of peace”** (Townsend 85).

The above proverb is used at the end of the fable *The Wild Boar and The Fox*. The fable tells the story of a wild boar who was rubbing his tusks against the trunk of a tree. A fox passed by and asked the boar why he was sharpening his tusks when there was no danger around. The boar told the fox that he did it on purpose because when danger approaches, he cannot spend his time sharpening his tusks in time of need.

The proverb tells that the wild boar prepared for war, which guaranteed peace. The proverb is made of “to be well prepared for war”, and “the best guarantee of peace”. The preparation of the boar gave him the guarantee of peace at the time of war. When the boar faces danger, he must not worry about sharpening his tusks as he has already done it. Thus, the fable and the proverb correspond with each other. The reading of the proverb recalls the story immediately.

**“Evil wishes, like chickens, come home to roost”** (Townsend 86).

The story, *The Bee and Jupiter* illustrates the above proverb. A honey bee queen went to Jupiter, giving him the best honey from her hive. On getting the best honey, Jupiter became cheerful and told her to ask for any gift she needed. She asked Jupiter to favour her with a sting that would kill any living being who came to take her honey. Jupiter had a pitiful outlook on such a request, yet he had to keep his word, so he undoubtedly gave her the gift. Jupiter consented to the condition that her sting would bring about her demise. The proverb correlates with the religious context.

The proverbial elements are “the evil wish” and “the chickens come home to roost”. It conveys that any dishonest aim for others accompanies an awful outcome for us. In this manner, we should not consider something terrible for other people. Otherwise, it might turn awful.

**“He who shares the danger ought to share the prize”** (Townsend 90).

The proverb is used at the end of the fable *The Two Travellers and The Axe*. It tells the story of two travellers who were travelling together. One of the travellers found an axe on the go. He picked it up and said to the other traveller that he had found an axe. The other traveller told him that he should not say ‘I’ because they were travelling together, so he must use ‘we’ have found an axe. They went a little further when they saw the owner of the axe pursuing them. The traveller who had found the axe said that they were in trouble. The other traveller changed his mind and said that he must use ‘I’ as said before because he was right then.

In the context of the fable, the proverb shows that the traveller who told the other traveller to use ‘we’ instead of ‘I’ changed his mind when he came to know that the owner of the axe was following them. The proverb is made of “who shares the danger”, and “must share the price”. The traveller who insisted on saying ‘we’ refused to share the consequences. The proverb through the fable, suggests that one who accompanies you in the act should also accompany you in the result. Upon knowing that the axe’s owner is following, the traveller becomes aware of the consequences and refuses to be with his fellow traveller.

**“Stoop to conquer”** (Townsend 94).

The story, *The Oak and the Reeds* exemplifies the above proverb. There was an oak tree that tumbled off because of the strong current of the air and fell among the reeds close by a brook. It asked the reeds how he fell on earth because of the wind, and the reeds did not fall. The reeds said they twisted themselves at whatever point the air current flew, and the oak failed to do so. Thus, the reeds were saved, and the oak fell.

The proverb is related to the ecological context showing that the most adaptable things in nature endure the tragic impact, and the inflexible ones are demolished. It incorporates the proverbial components “stoop” and “conquer”. The proverb teaches us that whoever goes against

nature's law will undoubtedly be demolished. Hence, one needs to adjust according to the circumstances. Otherwise, hazardous effects will undeniably arise.

**“The grateful heart will always find opportunities to show its gratitude”** (Townsend 96).

The proverb relates to the fable *The Ant and The Dove*. The fable is about an ant who went off a riverbank to drink some water, but with the sudden rush of the stream of water, it was carried out into the water and was about to drown. A dove sitting on a tree branch hanging over the river saw this, picked a leaf, and threw it into the water. The ant climbed on the leaf and safely reached the bank of the river. The other day, a bird hunter was looking for his prey. He saw the dove and aimed at it. The ant saw this and stung the bird hunter who missed the dove. The dove flew away. The above proverb appropriately describes the essence of the story.

The proverb is made of “the grateful heart”, “always find opportunities”, and “to show its gratitude”. The ant was grateful to the dove as it was saved from drowning. The ant repaid the help of the dove by saving the dove from the bird hunter. Hence, the proverb says an indebted person always finds the chance to express gratitude. Thus, the proverb suggests that one must remember the favour done by others and repay it when the time comes.

**“The hero is brave in deeds as well as words”** (Townsend 99).

The fable of *The Hunter and The Woodman* makes use of the above proverb. It tells the story of a hunter who was in search of the footprints of a lion. He saw a woodcutter in the forest and he asked if he saw any footprints or the den of a lion. The woodcutter said to him that he would show him the lion himself. On listening to this, the hunter trembled with fear and said that he just needed the footprints and not the lion.

The proverb contradicts the fable as the hunter was not brave and yet went into the forest to look for the footprints of a lion. The proverb is made of “the hero is brave”, and “in deeds and words as well”. The hunter seemed to be brave, but his bravery was merely a showoff as he heard that the woodcutter could show him the lion himself, he became scared.

The fable and the proverb are contradictory, yet both correspondingly suggest that a hero is brave both in deeds and words. The person who is bold only with words is not a hero.

**“Uninvited guests seldom meet a welcome”** (Townsend 105).

The fable of *The Dog and The Cook* ends with the above proverb. It tells the story of a dog whose fellow friend dog was invited to a party organized by his master. The dog became happy to go to the party. He went to the party on time and was amazed to see the preparations. He wagged his tail in pleasure and moved here and there. The cook saw the dog, seized him by his legs, and threw him out of the house. He went howling terribly. The other dogs gathered near him and enquired about the feast. The dog said he did not remember anything as he drank more wine. In the context of the fable, the proverb suggests that uninvited guests do not receive a warm welcome.

The proverb is made of “uninvited guests”, and “seldom meet a welcome”. The cook saw the strange dog and threw him out of the house, assuming he was uninvited. Such strangers never receive a good welcome. The fable and the proverb complement each other to suggest the message.

**“The safeguards of virtue are hateful to the evil disposed”** (Townsend 105).

The above proverb is used at the end of the fable *The Thieves and The Cock*. It tells the story of thieves who robbed a house but did not find anything but a cock. They took the cock with them and were about to kill it when the cock requested them to spare his life as he was very serviceable to everyone. He said that he wakes up everyone when the morning time comes. The thieves said they would kill it because it woke up the people and their work got over. The proverb exactly points to this as bad people find it wrong when their work is disturbed by good deeds. The proverb is made of “the safeguard of virtue”, and “hateful to evil”. The good act of the cock is not suitable for the work of thieves; hence it is hateful, and the cock is killed for the same.

The proverb in the context of the fable highlights the fact that the good work of cock is useless to the thieves. The moment the proverb is read, it creates the compartments of the fable as a safeguard of virtue parallel to the cock’s argument of waking up the people and the hateful to the evil-disposed parallel to the thieves’ argument to kill the cock for the same reason.

**“It sometimes happens that one man has all the toil, and another all the profit”**  
(Townsend 107).

The fable of *The Lion, The Bear, and The Fox* uses the above proverb at the end. The fable is about a lion, a bear, and a fox. The lion and the bear caught prey simultaneously and started

fighting for whom the prey belonged. They fought very fiercely and wounded each other severely. While the lion and the bear were fighting, a fox saw their fight and waited for them to be exhausted due to the fight. When the lion and the bear lay down exhausted, the fox took the benefit and took away their prey. The lion and the bear said that our fight had served the fox. The proverb shows that the lion and the bear toiled hard to get the prey, but their hard work helped the fox to get the prey.

The proverb is made of “one man’s toil”, and “profit of another”. The lion and the bear caught the prey simultaneously, but they fought over its possession, and the fox benefited from the fight.

**“Happy is the man who learns from the misfortunes of others”** (Townsend 110).

The proverb finds its place at the end of the story, *The Lion, The Fox, and The Ass*. There was a lion, a fox, and an ass. They decided that any food they gathered should be distributed in three parts. One day, they got food from the jungle. The lion requested that the donkey should distribute the food in three parts. The donkey painstakingly shared the food into three equivalent parts. On seeing this, the lion killed the donkey. Then he requested that the fox should divide the food. The fox separated the food into two parts. One huge share was given to the lion, and a little share was saved. The lion became delighted about this and asked who had shown him how to divide the food. The fox told him that he learned it from the donkey’s destiny.

The proverb has a mythical context. The proverbial components in the saying are “happy”, “the man”, “learn”, and “the fate of others”. The proverb gives us the message that we ought to understand things from the encounters of others. Otherwise, we might have a similar destiny as others had.

**“It shows an evil disposition to take advantage of a friend in distress”** (Townsend 111).

The above proverb is from the fable *The Bull and The Goat*. The fable tells the story of a bull that a lion attacked. Escaping from the lion, the bull entered a cave that some shepherds occupied. The shepherds kept a male goat in the cave who started attacking the bull. The bull told the goat to stop attacking as he was not afraid of a goat but the lion. He said he would let the goat know what strength a bull possesses once the lion goes away.

The proverb points out that the bull was in distress, and the goat took advantage of it, which was a bad idea. The proverb is made of “an evil disposition”, “to take advantage”, and “someone in distress”. The bull was in distress as the lion attacked him. The male goat took advantage of the bull’s distressed situation and started attacking him. The goat’s act showed a bad character as it is not right to attack an already attacked being.

**“The best intentions will not always ensure success”** (Townsend 112).

The proverb is used at the end of the fable *The Monkeys and Their Mother*. The fable tells the story of a mother monkey who had two young monkeys. The mother loved and cared for one monkey and hated and neglected the other. The monkey that was cared for and loved somehow died and the neglected one was nurtured and raised well despite hatred. The fable points out the mother’s care for the one. Despite her good intentions for him, the monkey died.

The proverb is made of “the best intentions”, and “not always ensure success”. The mother’s intentions towards the loved monkey were good, but she failed to nurture him best. Similarly, when we take care of something and neglect other things, it may not always succeed, as expressed in the fable. The proverb relates to the mother in the story.

**“Misfortunes springing from ourselves are the hardest to bear”** (Townsend 114).

The fable of *The Oak and The Wood-Cutters* ends with the above proverb. The fable tells the story of a woodcutter and an oak tree. The woodcutter cut down the giant oak and used wedges from the branches of the same oak to divide the trunk and save their labour. The oak felt sorry and said that it did not feel bad about the strikes of the axe, but the wedges from his branches were used to cut him down.

The proverb represents the same message. The bad things that happened to us hurt more than anything else. The proverb is made of “misfortune arising from within”, and “is hard to bear”. In the context of the fable, the wedges made from the oak branches are the misfortunes that the oak tree finds very hard to bear. Thus, the proverb suggests that the disaster caused from within is tough to tolerate. The oak tree felt terrible about its downfall made easy by the wedges made from its branches.

**“Fine feathers don’t make fine birds”** (Townsend 114).

The fable *The Peacock and The Crane* uses the above proverb at the end. The story is about a peacock and a crane. The peacock was very proud of his tail. He spread his tail and mocked the crane and said that he felt like a king as he had all the golden and purple and all the colours of the rainbow while the crane lacked his beauty. The crane agreed and argued that he goes up high to heaven and raises his voice to the stars, and the peacock walks on the ground like an ordinary cock and other birds. The proverb proves the fact that delicate appearances do not make someone fine.

The proverb is made of “fine feathers”, and “don’t make fine birds”. In the context of the proverb, the peacock had the finest of feathers, but he could not be a fine bird as he mocked the crane for not having delicate feathers. This mockery does not make him a fine bird. On the other hand, the crane does not have the most delicate feathers, but he flies to the height of heaven. Thus, the proverb suggests that one should not feel proud of one’s appearance as there would be more than just the appearance to be proud of.

**“A man who can strike from a distance is no pleasant neighbour”** (Townsend 117).

The proverb is used at the end of the fable *The Bowman and Lion*. The fable tells the story of a bowman who went into the forest searching for prey. All the animals ran away at the approach of the bowman except the lion. The lion challenged the bowman to a fight. The bowman shot an arrow and told the lion that at first, he should deal with the messenger, and then he would come to know what it takes to fight him. Thus, the lion was wounded badly by the arrow. The lion started running away, but a fox met him and told him not to be afraid of the bowman. The lion said the man had wounded him severely, and he could not face the man.

In the context of the fable, the proverb highlights two aspects. The man who shot the lion by distance cannot be a good neighbour. The other aspect is the fox, who advised that the lion was nowhere near the bowman. The fox ran away just like the other animals in the forest at the approach of the bowman. Therefore, the fox’s advice from a distance is not a sign of a good neighbour. The proverb is made of “a man”, “who strikes from distance”, and “is not a pleasant neighbour”. The proverb thus suggests that the person who advises from a distance cannot be a good friend.

**“Contentment with our lot is an element of happiness”** (Townsend 118).

The fable of *The Crab and The Fox* ends with the above proverb. The fable tells the story of a crab who left his habitat on the seashore and chose to live in the meadows. One day, a fox saw the crab and ate it. When the fox ate the crab, it said that it deserved this fate as it left its habitat and started living on the land. The sea was the crab’s habitat, but it chose something different as it was not content with what it had, but it had to pay the price of its dissatisfaction.

The proverb is made of “contentment with what we have”, and “element of happiness”. The crab was not satisfied with the sea life and thus changed its territory, but the element of happiness vanished as the fox ate it. Therefore, the proverb suggests through the fable that one should be satisfied with the things at hand; otherwise, worse things are bound to happen.

**“In a change of government the poor change nothing beyond the name of their master”** (Townsend 118).

The proverb is used at the end of the fable *The Ass and The Old Shepherd*. It tells the story of a shepherd who saw his donkey eating grass in the meadows. The shepherd was suddenly alarmed by the shirk of the enemies and said to the donkey that they should run away or else they both would be captured. The donkey asked why he should run away. Whether the new master will put too much weight on his back. The shepherd replied no. The donkey further said that as long as he carried the weight, it did not matter who would be his master.

The proverb fits the context of the fable as the donkey expected the possible change of the master and supposed that the change of the master would not change his fate. It will change only the master as the previous master made him carry the weight; the new master will do the same. The proverb is made of “the change of master”, “the poor change nothing”, and “but the name of the master”. The fable points out that the change in the master changes nothing but only the master, and the master’s orders will be the same.

**“They are no friends whom you know not whether to trust or to distrust”** (Townsend 120).

The fable *The Dog and The Hare* ends with the above proverb. The fable is about a dog who chased a rabbit. The dog at once bit the rabbit and fawned it just as he was playing with the



other dog. The rabbit got fed up with it and said that the dog must exhibit his true intentions. If the dog wants to be friendly, he should not bite him hard, and if at all he wants to kill him, he should not fawn him.

In the context of the fable, the proverb explains that the rabbit became confused about whether the dog wanted to kill him or play with him. Thus, the proverb indicates that the rabbit is baffled to trust the dog or distrust. The proverb is made of “they are not friends”, and “whom you do not know whether to trust or distrust”. The fable and the proverb together suggest that if we are unable to trust or distrust a person, he is not a friend.

**“Count the cost before you commit yourselves”** (Townsend 121).

The proverb is used at the end of the fable *The Hares and The Foxes*. The story is about the rabbits who started a war with the eagles and requested the foxes to help them. The foxes replied that they would help them if they knew who they were and whom they were fighting with. In the context of the fable, the proverb warned the rabbit about the results before they took the decision. The rabbits started the war without thinking of the results, and when they needed help, they asked the foxes, but the foxes refused to help them. Thus, the rabbits fell into great difficulty.

The proverb is made of “count the cost”, and “before you commit yourself”. The proverb suggests that one must think about the consequences before deciding on something. In the context of the fable, the rabbits started the war against the eagles, and when they found out that they fell short of enough power, they asked the foxes for help, but the help could not be provided. Thus, the proverb exemplifies the importance of considering the prior possibility before making decisions.

**“Necessity is the mother of invention”** (Townsend 125).

The fable of *The Crow and The Pitcher* makes use of the proverb. It tells the story of a very thirsty crow. He saw a long-necked pot and thought that it might contain water. When he reached the pot, he saw that the water was at the bottom of the pot, and he could not reach the bottom of the pot. Then, he thought about how to get the water. He flew and gathered some stones and put them in the pot one by one. As he put the stones in the pot, the water raised to the mouth of the pot, and the crow was able to quench his thirst. The proverb rightly points out the message.

In the context of the fable, quenching the thirst was the necessity of the crow, and it gave birth to the invention of putting stones in the pot to get water. The proverb is made of “necessity”, and “the mother of invention”. The need to quench the thirst made the crow think creatively and find a way to reach the water. The proverb in the context of the story reiterates the message that inventions happen out of need.

### **To Conclude**

This analysis of some select fables reveals that proverbs are integrated into fables to strengthen their story content and to offer ethical guidance through the stories which are easy to listen to/read and follow. While adults and families benefit from these as these strengthen their positive traditions, children in schools benefit a lot from reading and listening to these stories. First of all, these fables become a great source for their dramas within the classroom. Students are assigned roles found in the fables and then their dialogue follows the story. Thus, their dramatic talents are developed. Secondly, using the proverbs in the fables they have read and played in their dramas, they may be encouraged to develop or create their own stories in writing as part of their language learning. This develops their creative literary skills. Thus there are many benefits in identifying the proverbs in fables. The corresponding relation between the proverbs and the fables makes the language-learning experience of the students entertaining and effective.

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### **References**

Three Hundred Æsop’s Fables (1887) *by Aesop, translated by George Fyler Townsend* Published by G. Routledge and Sons.

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