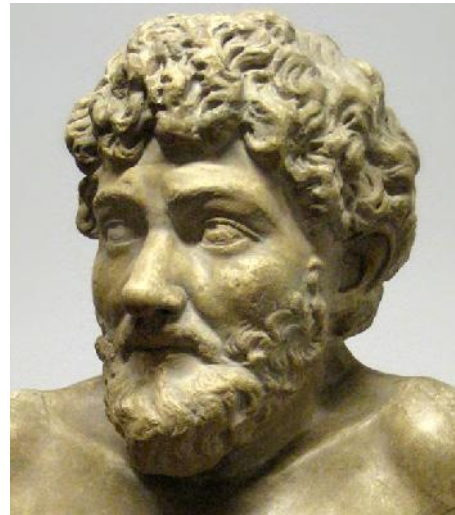


Here are three stories, rather than one! They were all written by a Greek storyteller called AESOP (pronounced 'Ee-sop'). Aesop lived round about 600 BC, which you'll remember is 600 years before Jesus was born. And as we are living in 2020, two thousand and twenty years after Jesus was born, Aesop lived about 2,600 years before us - a very long time ago! But a lot of his stories have survived to this day - they were so good, that people couldn't stop telling them to each other. And I am sure you will actually have a copy of AESOP'S FABLES somewhere in that wonderful house you live in - yet another example of the treasure that is all around if you, if you look for it. But they are also easily available for free on the Internet. So what is a 'fable'? A fable is a story that is intended to teach you some kind of lesson about life. And that's why Aesop's fables have survived to this day - because the lessons they teach you about life are very good. Right - let's get on with the stories, and see what we can learn from them:



#### THE WIND AND THE SUN

The Wind and the Sun were having an argument one day about who was the more powerful. As they were arguing, they saw a man with a cloak walking along a road. The Sun said to The Wind, 'Let's test out how strong we are by seeing which of us can get that cloak off that man's back.' The Wind said, 'Okay - me first!' And The Wind blew and blew and blew, trying to whip that cloak off the man's back. But the more fiercely The Wind blew, the more the man held on to his cloak to stop it blowing away in the wind. Eventually, The Wind gave up - he was all puffed out. 'Okay - let's see if you can do better,' he croaked. Then The Sun came out and beamed and beamed and beamed, and it got so hot that the man took his cloak off to try and cool down. 'I win!' said The Sun.

The moral (or point) of this story is that it is easier to get your way if you have a sunny disposition and you are nice to everyone, than if you try to force people to do what you want. But perhaps another point is that if you are having an argument with someone, be very suspicious if they suggest a way of deciding whether you are right or they are right - watch out to see if they are being clever, and suggesting a way of deciding which of you is right that they already know will win for them.

#### THE FOX AND THE GRAPES

A fox was walking along when he saw some grapes hanging from a vine that had grown up around the branches of a tree. The fox jumped up to try and get the grapes, but they were too high up for him to reach. He jumped again and again, but with no luck - and each jump he made tired him out a bit more so the next jump was even less high than the previous one. Seeing he was getting nowhere, the fox walked away, thinking, 'I'm such an idiot to being jumping for those grapes - it looks like they are really sour.'

The moral of this story is that when good things are difficult to achieve, we often end up thinking that it's not worth our trying to achieve them, so that we don't feel so bad about giving up in the face of the difficulties we face in trying to achieve those things. But they really are still worth achieving, even though they are difficult.

## THE CROW AND THE JUG

A crow was flying around when he spotted a jug on the ground, with some water in it. It was very hot day, and the crow desperately needed a drink - so he thought it was his lucky day when he saw the water in the jug. But when he landed on the jug to drink the water, he discovered that his beak wasn't long enough to drink the water - it was too low down in the jug. Now crows are really, really clever birds and the crow knew that if he knocked the jug over, all the water would spill onto the ground, and he wouldn't be able to drink it. So what to do? Thinking about it, the crow had a really good idea. He hopped around and got some pebbles and dropped them in the jug. With every pebble that he dropped in the jug, the water level in the Jug got higher and higher. (Remember that's how ARCHIMEDES discovered how he could work out the size of the king's crown to test whether it was made out of pure gold?) And soon enough the water level was high enough that the crow could drink as much water as he liked.

The moral of this story is that when good things are difficult to achieve, instead of giving up on trying to achieve them (and thinking 'It's not worth bothering with'), we should use our God-given brains and work out a way to achieve them.