

The Peacelike Mongoose

[Mongoose - an animal that eats snakes]

In cobra country a mongoose was born one day who didn't want to fight cobras or anything else. The word spread from mongoose to mongoose that there was a mongoose who didn't want to fight cobras. If he didn't want to fight anything else, it was his own business, but it was the duty of every mongoose to kill cobras or be killed by cobras.

"Why?" asked the peaceful mongoose, and the word went around that the strange new mongoose was not only pro-cobra and anti-mongoose but intellectually curious and against the ideals and traditions of mongoosism.

"He is crazy," cried the young mongoose's father.

"He is sick," said his mother.

"He is a coward," shouted his brothers.

"He is a mongoosesexual," whispered his sisters.

Strangers who had never laid eyes on the peaceful mongoose remembered that they had seen him crawling on his stomach, or trying on cobra hoods, or plotting the violent overthrow of Mongoosia.

"I am trying to use reason and intelligence," said the strange new mongoose.

"Reason is six-sevenths of treason," said one of his neighbors.

"Intelligence is what the enemy uses," said another.

Finally, the rumor spread that the mongoose had venom in his sting, like a cobra, and he was tried, convicted by a show of paws, and condemned to banishment.

Moral: Ashes to ashes, and clay to clay, if the enemy doesn't get you your own folks may.

A - Answer the following questions.

1. What type of text is this? Justify your answer.
A short story, more specifically a fable. Animals talk and there is a moral
2. List the accusations his family made against him. Use your own words.
His father said he was mad or insane, his mother thought he was ill, his brothers accused him of being cowardly and his sisters believed he was 'mongoosesexual', that is questioned his sexual orientation.
3. Did the mongoose have 'venom in his sting'? Line 17. Account for your answer.
Obviously not. The accusations were false; the other animals had never seen him.

Other people accused him of treason. How do you know these accusations were false?

These people had never seen him so they could not remember seeing doing anything.

4. What happened to him in the end?
He was expelled. The other animals condemned him for treason and banished him without fair trial

What was the mongoose like in reality?

Just an independent young fellow who liked to think on his own, and making his own decisions instead of doing what everybody does without considering whether that is just or unjust. Apparently, a minority.

5. What is the story really about? (Theme)

Society. Oppressive social relationships that grant no place for independent thinking or acting. Prejudice and bigotry.

NOTE: fables are never about the animals themselves.

B - Use the word given at the end of each line to form a word that fits in the space. All sentences were taken from the fables you read.

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. It is well known that lettuce - eaters cause lightning. | eat |
| 2. The aggressive Scotty announced he would fight. | aggression |
| 3. Once upon a starless night there was an owl. | star (without stars) |
| 4. A goldfinch flying swiftly across the field struck the glass. | swift |
| 5. The wolf disappears/disappeared into the wood. | appear (opposite) |
| 6. She told everyone that the gander was a dangerous bird. | danger |
| 7. A young and impressionable moth once set his heart on a certain star. | impression |
| | |
| 1. We will come to your aid in all probability . | probable |
| 2. The Scotty was contemptuous of the farm dogs he met. | contempt |
| 3. It was impossible for anyone to see them in that thick darkness . | dark |
| 4. Some builders left a large square of plate glass in a field. | build |
| 5. The wolf disappears/disappeared into the wood. | appear (opposite) |
| 6. She told everyone that the gander was a dangerous bird. | danger |
| 7. A young and impressionable moth once set his heart on a certain star. | impression |

C - Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between two and six words including the word given.

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| 1. "Why do I have to kill snakes?" asked the peaceful mongoose.
The mongoose wondered why he had to kill snakes. | wondered |
| 2. "I am trying to use reason and intelligence," said the mongoose.
The mongoose explained he was trying to use reason and intelligence. | explained |
| 3. "The mongoose should be expelled now," said one of the neighbours.
One of the neighbours suggested expelling the mongoose. | suggested |
| 4. His brothers accused him of being a coward.
"He is a coward" , said his brothers. | he |
| 5. "Don't act silly," his mother told him.
His mother told him not to act silly . | not |
| | |
| 1. "Why do I have to kill snakes?" asked the peaceful mongoose.
The mongoose wanted to know why he had to kill snakes. | wanted |
| 2. "I am trying to use reason and intelligence," said the mongoose.
The mongoose argued he was trying to use reason and intelligence. | argued |
| 3. "The mongoose should be expelled now," said one of the neighbours.
One of the neighbours suggested expelling the mongoose. | suggested |

4. His sisters accused him of being a mongoosesexual. **you**
"You are a mongoosesexual," said his sisters.
5. "Don't act like a coward," his brother told him. **not**
His brother told him **not to act like a coward.**

D - Read the text and find the word which best fits each space. Use only one word in each space.

James Thurber, **1. one** of the outstanding American humorists of the twentieth century, is known **2. for** his distinctively funny cartoons and short stories. His concise, witty prose spanned a breadth of genres, including autobiography, fiction, children's fantasy, and modern commentary.

Thurber **3. was** born in Columbus **4. on** December 8, 1894. His father was a clerk who often served politicians, and his mother was **5. an** eccentric woman who **6. would** be an influence for many of his stories. Thurber had two brothers. As a young boy, Thurber lost sight in one of his eyes **7. while** playing "William Tell" with his brothers, an accident which eventually caused **8. him** to go completely blind later in life. Still, Thurber had a fairly normal childhood. Thurber attended local public schools. He went to the Ohio State University from 1913-1917. Due to his eye injury, Thurber never completed a compulsory ROTC course and **9. did** not graduate from Ohio State, **10. though** he received a posthumous degree.

Thurber started his professional writing career **1. as** a reporter for the *Columbus Dispatch* in 1920. He began writing **2. for** the *New Yorker* in 1927 after friend E.B. White (*Charlotte's Web*) got him a job at the magazine. Thurber started as an editor for the magazine but quickly **3. became** a writer. His career as a cartoonist began in 1930, **4. when** White dug some of Thurber's drawings out of the trash and submitted **5. them** to be published in the *New Yorker*.

6. Though hampered by failing eyesight, Thurber wrote nearly forty books, including collections of essays, short stories, fables, and children's stories. He **7. won** a Tony Award for his popular Broadway play, *A Thurber Carnival*, in which he often starred as **8. himself**.

Thurber died **9. of** complications from pneumonia **10. on** November 2, 1961. He is buried in Columbus' Greenlawn Cemetery.