

# Aesop and His Fables

By Vickie Chao

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<sup>1</sup> Aesop was a famous Greek storyteller. But he was also a legendary figure. For centuries, scholars have tried to figure out if he had actually existed. Some believe he did. Others think he did not. For those who believe he did, they could not say for sure where he had come from. They also could not say for sure when he was born. Among the various theories, one claimed that Aesop was once a slave in the 6th century B.C. After he was freed, he became an advisor to Croesus, the King of Lydia. One day, Croesus sent Aesop to a city called Delphi. He gave the famous storyteller a large sum of gold and asked him to distribute it among the citizens there. But for whatever reason unknown to us, Aesop did not give out the money. Filled with anger, the citizens of Delphi killed him.

<sup>2</sup> Mysterious as he was, Aesop was the rumored author of hundreds of fables. His stories were always very short. And they always ended with a moral lesson. Of his works, there were several that were so popular that they have since become part of our vocabularies. For example, we use the term "sour grapes" to describe a person who belittles something simply because he could not get it. That term was derived from Aesop's story "The Fox and the Grapes." We use the phrase "cry wolf" to blame a person for raising a false alarm. That phrase was borrowed from Aesop's story "The Shepherd's Boy and the Wolf."

<sup>3</sup> For thousands of years, children everywhere have enjoyed reading Aesop's fables a lot. They like them because they are easy to understand. Their parents like them, too, because the tales offer good advice. The advice never goes out of style.

<sup>4</sup> As a tribute to this remarkable yet mysterious writer, here is my favorite Aesop's fable. It is called "The Ant and the Grasshopper":

<sup>5</sup> On one fine summer's day, a grasshopper was hopping about and having a grand time. As it was chirping and singing, it saw an ant carrying an ear of corn on its back. The grasshopper said, "My friend, come and play with me. The weather is nice. Let's not waste it."

<sup>6</sup> The ant replied, "Sorry, but I can't. I am collecting food for the winter right now. You should do the same."

7 "Why worry about the winter? We have plenty of food right now!" snickered the grasshopper.

8 Upon hearing that, the ant bid the grasshopper good-bye and went on its way. Several months later, the grasshopper found itself starving. It was now the wintertime, and there was no food anywhere! As the grasshopper was slowly dying of hunger, it saw the ants distributing corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer. Then the grasshopper knew: *It is best to prepare for the days of necessity.*

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Name \_\_\_\_\_



Date \_\_\_\_\_

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| <p>1. Which of the following about Aesop is true?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Aesop was the king of Lydia.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Aesop was a famous Greek storyteller.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Aesop was the confirmed author of hundreds of fables.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Aesop was probably from the 6th century A.D.</p> | <p>2. What is the usual ending of an Aesop's fable?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A A moral lesson</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B A song</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C A picture</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D A poem</p>   |
| <p>3. In Aesop's "The Ant and the Grasshopper," why was the grasshopper dying?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Because it lost its wings</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Because it did not prepare food for the winter</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Because a storm destroyed its home</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Because it ate too much</p>      | <p>4. According to legends, who killed Aesop?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A The citizens of Sparta</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B The citizens of Delphi</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C The citizens of Samos</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D The citizens of Athens</p> |

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| <p>5. According to legends, what did Aesop do before he became the advisor to Croesus?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A He was a rich businessman.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B He was a teacher.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C He was an actor.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D He was a slave.</p>   | <p>6. What was the original source of the phrase "sour grapes"?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Aesop's "The Bundle of Sticks"</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Aesop's "The Fox and the Grapes"</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Aesop's "The Lion and the Mouse"</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Aesop's "The Shepherd's Boy and the Wolf"</p> |
| <p>7. What will happen when a person keeps "crying wolf"?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Everybody will come and beat that person up.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Nobody will come when that person really needs help.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C That person will have more friends than everybody else.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D That person will eventually get what he wants.</p> |  |