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Title: Gladius

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Gladius

- 1 Malus multosque perdit et solus perit.
- 2 Gladium viator in via quem invenerat
- 3 iacentem interrogavit, "Quis te perdidit?"
- 4 Cui contra telum, "Me unus, sed multos ego."

Notes

1. **-que...et.** This is a "both... and..." statement, playing on the contrast between *multos* and *solus*.

2. **gladium.** This noun is the object of the verb *interrogavit*.

2. **quem.** This relative pronoun refers to the *gladium*. The relative clause stretches across two lines: *quem invenerat iacentem in via*.

3. **perdidit.** The fable plays on the multiple meanings of the verb *perdere* in Latin: it can mean "to lose, abandon"

(*unus me perdit*) and it can also mean "to destroy, kill" (*ego perdidit multos*).

4. *telum*. The *telum*, i.e. *gladius*, is the subject of an implied verb of speaking (*dicit, ait, inquit*, etc.), with *cui* as the indirect object of that verb.

4. *me unus*. These words answer the question: "Quis te perdidit?" "Me (perdidit) unus."

4. *multos ego*. These words play on the meaning of *perdere*, echoing the *multos-solus* in line 1: "Multos (perdidit) ego."

Vocabulary

perdo (*perdere, perdidit*). to lose, abandon; to destroy, kill

pereo (*perire*). to pass away, to perish, to die

telum (*teli*). spear, weapon

Commentary

This tiny fable has the general statement *before* the fable narrative, rather than its more usual position *after* the fable narrative. When that general statement (sometimes called "the moral") comes first, it is called a "promythium" (before-story), and when it comes after, it is called an "epimythium" (after-story).