

## The Shepherd and the Sheep

A shepherd driving his sheep to a wood saw an oak of unusual size full of acorns so, spreading his cloak under the branches, he climbed up into the tree and shook them down. The sheep eating the acorns inadvertently frayed and tore the cloak. When the shepherd came down and saw what was done, he said, "O you most ungrateful creatures! You provide wool to make garments for all other men but you destroy the clothes of him who feeds you."

**Moral:** Hunger can lead to destruction.

## The Frogs Asking for a King

The frogs were tired of governing themselves. They had so much freedom that it had spoiled them, and they did nothing but sit around croaking in a bored manner and wishing for a government that could entertain them with the pomp and display of royalty and rule them in a way to make them know they were being ruled. No milk and water government for them, they declared. So they sent a petition to Jupiter asking for a king. Jupiter saw what simple and foolish creatures they were, but to keep them quiet and make them think they had a king, he threw down a huge log, which fell into the water with a great splash. The frogs hid themselves among the reeds and grasses, thinking the new king to be some fearful giant. But they soon discovered how tame and peaceable King Log was. In a short time, the younger frogs were using him for a diving platform while the older frogs made him a meeting place where they complained loudly to Jupiter about the government. To teach the frogs a lesson, the ruler of the gods now sent a crane to be king of Frogland. The crane proved to be a very different sort of king from old King Log. He gobbled up the poor frogs right and left and they soon saw what fools they had been. In mournful croaks, they begged Jupiter to take away the cruel tyrant before they should all be destroyed. "How now!" cried Jupiter. "Are you not yet content? You have what you asked for and so you have only yourselves to blame for your misfortunes."

**Moral:** It's important to consider the outcome when asking for change.

## The Hawk and the Nightingale

A nightingale, sitting aloft upon an oak and singing as usual, was seen by a hawk who, being in need of food, swooped down and seized him. The nightingale, about to lose his life, earnestly begged the hawk to let him go, saying that he was not big enough to satisfy the hunger of a hawk who, if he wanted food, ought to pursue the larger birds. The hawk, interrupting him, said, "I should indeed have lost my senses if I should let go of food ready in my hand for the sake of pursuing birds that are not yet even within sight."

**Moral:** It is better to take the opportunities you're presented with than to wait for perfection.

## The Travelers and the Plane Tree

Two travelers walking in the noonday sun sought the shade of a wide-spreading tree to rest. As they lay looking up among the pleasant leaves, they saw that it was a plane tree. "How useless is the plane!" said one of them. "It bears no fruit whatever, and only serves to litter the ground with leaves."

"Ungrateful creatures!" said a voice from the plane tree. "You lie here in my cooling shade and yet you say I am useless! Thus ungratefully, O Jupiter, do men receive their blessings!"

**Moral:** Our best blessings are often overlooked.

## The Heron

A heron was walking sedately along the bank of a stream, his eyes on the clear water and his long neck and pointed bill ready to snap up a likely morsel for his breakfast. The clear water swarmed with fish, but Master Heron was hard to please that morning. "No small fry for me," he said. "Such scanty fare is not fit for a heron." Now a fine young perch swam near. "No indeed," said the heron. "I wouldn't even trouble to open my beak for anything like that!" As the sun rose, the fish left the shallow water near the shore and swam below into the cool depths toward the middle. The heron saw no more fish and he was very glad at last to breakfast on a tiny snail.

**Moral:** Someone who is too hard to please may end up with nothing at all.