

The Dog and the Oyster

There was once a dog who was very fond of eggs. He visited the hen house very often and at last got so greedy that he would swallow the eggs whole. One day, the dog wandered down to the seashore. There he spied an oyster. In a twinkling, the oyster was resting in the dog's stomach, shell and all. It pained the dog a good deal, as you can guess. "I've learned that not all round things are eggs," he said, groaning.

Moral: Greed can cause pain.

The Monkey and the Camel

At a great celebration in honor of King Lion, the monkey was asked to dance for the company. His dancing was very clever indeed, and the animals were all highly pleased with his grace and lightness. The praise that was showered on the monkey made the camel envious. He was very sure that he could dance quite as well as the monkey—if not better—so he pushed his way into the crowd that had gathered around the monkey and, rising on his hind legs, began to dance. But the big hulking camel looked very ridiculous as he kicked out his knotty legs and twisted his long clumsy neck. Besides, the animals found it hard to keep their toes from under his heavy hoofs. At last, when one of his huge feet came within an inch of King Lion's nose, the animals were so disgusted that they set upon the camel in a rage and drove him out into the desert. Shortly afterward, refreshments—consisting mostly of camel's hump and ribs—were served to the company.

Moral: It is absurd to compete with everyone you see.

The Trumpeter Taken Prisoner

Upon the defeat of an army in battle, a trumpeter was taken prisoner. The soldiers were about to put him to death, when he cried, "Nay, gentlemen, why should you kill me? This hand of mine is guiltless of a single life."

"Yes," replied the soldiers; "but with that braying instrument of yours, you incite others, and you must share the same fate as they."

Moral: There are many ways to recognize an enemy.

The Boy and the Filberts

A boy was given permission to put his hand into a pitcher to get some filberts. But he took such a great fistful that he could not draw his hand out again. There he stood, unwilling to give up a single filbert and yet unable to get them all out at once. Vexed and disappointed, he began to cry. “My boy,” said his mother, “be satisfied with half the nuts you have taken and you will easily get your hand out. Then perhaps you may have some more filberts some other time.”

Moral: A little at a time is often the best way.

The One-Eyed Doe

A doe had had the misfortune to lose one of her eyes and could not see anyone approaching her on that side. So to avoid any danger, she always used to feed on a high cliff near the sea with her good eye looking toward the land. By this means, she could see whenever the hunters approached her on land and often escaped. But the hunters found out that she was blind in one eye and, hiring a boat, rowed under the cliff where she used to feed and shot her from the sea. “Ah,” she cried with her dying voice, “You cannot escape your fate.”

Moral: A person’s blind side is always at risk.