



AESOP'S Fables

by RED HERRING PUPPETS

***STUDY GUIDE AND RESOURCE MATERIALS
for teachers***



AESOP'S FABLES

Red Herring Puppets perform an original rhymed version of the classic tales with original music and large tabletop puppets designed for pre K - 6th grades. These timeless stories are simple to understand and address topics relevant to school age children such as bullying, selfishness, competition, ingenuity, and the affirmation that little beings can achieve great things. All performances include:

The Lion and the Mouse
The Tortoise and the Hare
The Owl and the Grasshopper
The Fox and the Crow
The Crow and the Pitcher
The Stork and the Fox.

WHO WAS AESOP?

The exact details of Aesop's life are a mystery but most scholars agree that he was born a slave in Greece around 620 B.C. He was a clever man who made up stories that helped people get along. His second master gave him liberty as reward for his learning and wit. As a free man, Aesop traveled throughout Greece meeting philosophers, politicians, wise men, and royalty.



Aesop is credited with some 400 fables, though not all of these were actually written by him. The stories of Aesop are very much alive today and have become a standard in moral education worldwide.

WHAT IS A FABLE?

A fable is a story that uses made up characters, humor, and wit to teach a moral lesson. The goal of a good fable is to improve human conduct without the reader being aware that they are being thus instructed.

CAST OF CHARACTERS and their CHARACTERISTICS



STORK (Penelope) honest / gullible



FOX (Paris) - cunning / clever / dishonest



HARE (Zephyr) arrogant / speedy



TORTOISE (Odysseus) slow and steady



LION (Agamemnon) strong / proud



MOUSE (Hermes) youthful / smart / good-natured



CROW (Hera) vain / resourceful



OWL (Tiresias) wise / old / set in his ways

GRASSHOPPER (Icarus) selfish / inconsiderate



MEET THE RED HERRING PUPPETS

Founded in 1988, Red Herring Puppets are based in Western North Carolina. They delight young audiences with their lively and informative "edu-tainment."

Lisa Sturz, Artistic Director, is an Emmy Award winning puppeteer and teaching artist who has worked with Henson Productions, Lucasfilm, Disney Imagineering, NBC, PBS, the Ice Capades, the Asheville Symphony and the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Lisa's giant puppets have been featured at the Field Museum, the Shedd Aquarium, and the Biltmore Estate. Film and television credits include Murphy Brown, Puzzle Place, Elmo in Grouchland, Muppets in Space, the Flintstones, Howard the Duck and Ninja Turtles III. She holds an MFA in puppetry and her work has been supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Jim Henson Foundation, the Puppeteers of America and many State and local arts agencies.

Robin Stevens, puppeteer, trained at the Cannon Hill Puppet Theatre in Birmingham UK. He worked for six years for the BBC as a puppeteer before joining the highly successful Children's Television Production Company, Ragdoll Ltd., the company that made Tellytubbies. Robin has won two British Academy awards.

Cathy Haas Riley, composer, has created "themes" for each animal in the forest based on ancient Greek modes. The music was recorded at Ashman studios and many "sampled" sounds were used to enhance the final score.

GREEK VOCABULARY WORDS

Ambrosia - the food of the Gods, which granted them immortality



Chariot - a wheeled cart

Fate - The Greek concept that certain events must occur.

Hades - The Greek underworld where people were believed to go when they die.



Laurel Wreath - Leaves used by the ancient Greeks to make crowns for the victors of the Pythian games.

Marathon - a long distance foot race



Matrix - something within which something else originates

Nymph - a beautiful female nature spirit inhabiting the forests and water sources.



Olympic Games - an ancient festival held every four years with contests for sports, music, and literature.

Parthenon - Temple of Athena built on the acropolis of Athens in the 5th century B.C.

Urn - an ornamental serving vessel.



THE WORLD OF THE GREEKS

Many references are made in our script to Greek Gods and Goddesses and other important personages. Below is a quick guide to their identities.



IMMORTALS

Aphrodite was the Goddess of Love.

Apollo was the Greek sun God who rode a chariot across the sky.

Athena was the Goddess of wisdom and war.

Eros was the God of Love who shot arrows to make his victims fall in love.

Hades was the brother of Zeus and ruler of the Underworld.

Hera was the wife of Zeus who was often untrue to her.

Hermes was the messenger of the Gods who raced with winged feet.

Muses are nine sister goddesses of Greek mythology who presided over the arts and sciences.

Persephone was Goddess of the Underworld who spent half her time in Hades (winter) and half on Earth (Spring).

Zephyr was the god of the west wind.

Zeus was the supreme ruler of the Gods.

GREEK HEROES AND PERSONAGES

Agamemnon was a famous Greek King.

Hercules was son of Zeus and d a mortal woman known for his strength.

Odysseus was the son of King Laertes of Ithaca. Homer wrote of his epic journey to return home after the Trojan War.

Paris abducted Helen of Troy and starting the Trojan War.

Penelope was the faithful wife of Odysseus.

PUPPETRY is an ancient art form that began, like traditional theatre, as an expression of ritual and magic. Puppetry is the art of transforming inanimate objects into believable characters. There are many different kinds of puppets which are usually distinguished by how they are manipulated.

Most of the puppets used in "Aesop's Fables" are a unique blend that falls into the category of tabletop puppets. This genre grew out of the Bunraku tradition in Japan - a form of rod puppetry in which the puppeteers are in full view.

The inspiration for our puppet design came from a puppet created by an 8 year old boy, Morgan Cobb, who was in one of our puppet workshops. Morgan had taken two long cardboard tubes and attached them together at the top with masking tape. He drew a face onto a paper plate and attached this to the top of the legs. He added a small T-shirt he had worn as a toddler and named the puppet "Dante". Morgan made the puppet walk by moving the cardboard tubes in opposition.

We modified Morgan's idea to withstand the rigors of live performance. We used heavier plastic tubing instead of cardboard, added foam and fabric to give the face and body three dimensions, increased the movement vocabulary with hand tubes and extra rods, and gave the puppets a Greek feel.

We hope the simplicity of the design echoes the purity of the stories. The result is a simple folk art style that audiences can understand and re-create themselves.

**If you want to learn more about puppetry, check out the website for The Puppeteers of America. <http://puppeteers.org/>
They host a store that has hundreds of books on the history, construction, manipulation, and scripting of puppets.
<http://store.puppeteers.org/>**



Red Herring Puppets
was awarded the **2009 UNIMA Citation of Excellence**
(the highest honor in American puppetry)

Review Panelists said:

"A masterful show for young audiences, including charming brightly colored puppets, with appealing characteristics."

"The music is delightful."