

NEW CONTEMPORARY  
TRANSLATION

***Kyrlov's Fables***

Translated by:

**Youmna Adel**

Reviewed, with a preface  
by:

**Abanoub Wagdy**

# PREFACE

**Welcome to the enchanting world of Kyrlov's Fables, where animals speak, moral lessons abound, and wit reigns supreme. In this timeless collection, Ivan Krylov, Russia's beloved fabulist, weaves together tales that not only entertain but also offer profound insights into the complexities of human nature.**

**Born in 1769, Krylov stood out as a literary figure during the Golden Age of Russian literature. Drawing inspiration from Aesop's fables and La Fontaine's works, Krylov crafted his own distinctive style, infusing each story with a uniquely Russian flavor and a keen understanding of the human condition.**

**Within these pages, readers will encounter a rich tapestry of characters – from cunning foxes and wise old owls to boastful roosters and bumbling bears – each embodying universal truths and timeless wisdom. Through his astute observations of society and human folly, Krylov masterfully uses the animal kingdom as a mirror to reflect the foibles and follies of humanity.**

**Yet, beyond their moral lessons, Krylov's fables captivate with their humor, charm, and lyrical prose. His sharp wit and satirical eye bring to life a world where vanity, greed, and hubris are invariably met with their just consequences, while humility, kindness, and wisdom are celebrated as virtues to be cherished.**

**It is with great pleasure and admiration that we introduce this new edition of Krylov's timeless fables, skillfully translated into English by the talented**

**Egyptian translator Youmna Adel. In bringing these beloved tales to a modern English-speaking audience, Adel has embarked on a literary journey that bridges cultures and transcends boundaries, breathing new life into Ivan Krylov's enduring legacy.**

**Drawing from an Arabic rendition of Krylov's fables, Adel deftly navigates the nuances of language and culture to craft a fresh and vibrant English translation. Her meticulous attention to detail, coupled with a deep appreciation for the original text, ensures that the essence and spirit of Krylov's stories remain intact, while also making them accessible to a global audience.**

**In the process of this translation, Adel's work was further enriched by the invaluable insights and expertise of Egyptian scholar and translator Abanoub Wagdy. With his profound understanding of both**

**Arabic and English literature, Wagdy provided invaluable guidance, ensuring the fidelity and integrity of the translation while offering nuanced interpretations that enhance the reader's appreciation of Krylov's fables.**

**As we delve into the pages of this book, we are reminded of the enduring relevance and universal appeal of Krylov's tales. Through the antics of animals and the foibles of mankind, these fables offer timeless wisdom and moral lessons that resonate across cultures and generations. They serve as a poignant reminder of the human condition, celebrating virtues such as humility, kindness, and wisdom, while cautioning against the perils of pride, greed, and folly.**

**We are indebted to Youmna Adel and Abanoub Wagdy for their dedication and expertise in bringing Krylov's fables to life in English, ensuring that these cherished stories continue to inspire and enchant readers around**

**the world. May this translation serve as a testament to the enduring power of storytelling to unite, educate, and uplift humanity, transcending linguistic and cultural barriers with its timeless wisdom and universal truths.**

**As we embark on this literary journey through Krylov's fables, let us pause to appreciate the enduring legacy of a storyteller whose tales continue to resonate across generations and cultures. May these timeless fables inspire, amuse, and enlighten readers of all ages, reminding us of the enduring power of storytelling to illuminate the human experience.**

**So, dear reader, join me as we venture into the enchanting realm of Krylov's Fables, where wisdom awaits amidst the antics of animals and the follies of mankind.**

**A Puppy**

**Challenges an**

**Elephant**

A Mahout was leading an enormous elephant through the city's largest roads, when a small puppy saw him, and started barking around the elephant and jumping towards him, as if he was attacking him and provoking him to fight and wrestle him.

The mahout looked at him and rebuked him mockingly, saying: “Do you really want, little one, to fight this elephant? If so, trust that your voice will hoarse before he even glances at you or pays you the slightest attention, my advice to you is to have mercy on yourself, rest your throat, and go on your way.”

“Don't worry, my friend,” said the cunning puppy, “I am certain of the truth of what you say, and if I were not, I would not have dared to attack your mighty elephant in such a way that will amaze everyone who knows about it and make them say: “Look



at this brave little puppy! He is truly a valiant hero, and a courageous sly dog, otherwise he would not have dared to challenge this elephant."

# The Ant

Once upon a time, there lived an ant whose story was mentioned by a great ant historian. There is no doubt about the truth of his account.

He said that she was gifted with astonishing strength, the likes of which had never been seen before in any of her kind. She was able to lift two large barley grains off the ground. She was also well known for her courage and bravery. When she encountered a worm, she would attack it, defeat it, and tear it to pieces without any fear or hesitation. It was even said that she did not fear the might of the spider.

News of her strength and heroism spread to every ant village. She reveled in the praise and flattery that was showered upon her, and soon became filled with pride. She began to strut

around with arrogance, as if to say to the earth, "Bring it on, I can handle it!" This eventually led her to decide to travel to the great city to gain even more fame. So she hurried to the top of a bundle of straw that was placed next to the carriage going to the city and sat on it. And so she entered the city like a great conqueror.

But how great was the shock to her pride when she saw that the people of the city did not rush to the streets, squares, and public squares that her luxurious carriage passed through to catch a glimpse of her, or to feast their eyes on her acrobatic tricks and exhibitionist somersaults. Rather, they went about their business without even looking at her or paying her the slightest attention. Rather, they went about their business without even looking at her or paying her the slightest attention. How many

times did she try to attract their attention by jumping, leaping, and lifting large objects, but to no avail!

Finally, when her tricks were exhausted and she was tired, she turned her eyes to the dog sleeping next to her master's carriage and addressed him, saying: "Dear Fido, don't you see like me that all the inhabitants of this big city are devoid of feeling? They have eyes but they don't see, and ears but they don't hear. I have spent more than an hour here, exhausting my body to show them my strength and skill in the games that charm hearts, but no one of them paid attention to me, even though my fame has spread to our town, and I have become the talk of its people." She said this, and when she heard no answer from Fido, she turned her back on him and the city and headed towards her village.

**The Empty**

**Barrel & the**

**Full Barrel**

Two barrels walked on their way from the old warehouse to the new one, each of them rolls a brawny boy.

One of them was full of drink, while the other was empty and dry, with nothing inside.

The first one was walking saunter and quietly, while the second one, for being empty and light, was jumping and shaking, making a clank and rumbling like that of thunder, which startled those were in its path and made them clear the way for it in horror and fear, or to avoid hearing its annoying sound.

Now, dear reader, don't you see with me that the greatness of the full barrel was manifested in its slowness, solemnity, and silence, while the clank of its empty companion has involved in a scandal?! And that reinforces the saying: "Empty barrels make more commotion than full ones."

# **The Fox and the Marmot**



A marmot shouted at a fox, saying: “Why do you jump this way, O fox? You run as if you are fleeing from definitive death.”

The fox replied, panting heavily, barely catching his breath, “How terrible the accusations that people randomly unjustly attach to my name, while I’m innocent of them, my friend! I have been guarding henhouse around here for a long time, and I have not closed my eyes all nights, nor have I enjoyed eating a bit all days, until my health has deteriorated. After all this great effort, they are disgracing me; as they say about me: ‘I’m a despicable and low thief.’ What an atrocity accusation that makes my body shudders!... Am I really a thief? Would you be pleased if a stigma were attached to your friend who is far above? I beg you and implore you to swear to them that I am innocent, because you, undoubtedly, did not see me steal! Isn't that right?”

The marmot said, "Indeed, I did not see you steal the chickens, my friend, but the truth should be told: I have often seen feathers stuck to your snout."

**The Gentle**

**Lamb**

The naive lamb came across the skin of a wolf. It occurred to him to play a funny trick on his friends, so he put on the skin and slipped in among his friends and brothers in the herd to amuse them with his new costume.

Before he realized the panic and fear he had caused in the enclosure, the guard dogs were on top of him, their fangs digging into his skin and flesh, tearing him to pieces.

Fortunately, the shepherd saw him under the wolf's skin and chased the dogs away, saved him from a certain sad fate.

Gentle lambs should not appear in the guise of predatory wolves.

**The Little**

**Brook**

The poor shepherd sat by the little brook, wailing his luck, for one of his sheep had drowned in the nearby river.

The brook grieved for the shepherd's grief and began to comfort and console him, directing a bitter reproach to the river for its selfishness and harshness. It said: "Woe to you, you treacherous gluttonous! How hard your heart is! Is there no limit to your greed or end to your covetousness? If people could see what lies beneath your deep, turbid water, as they can see what lies in my little, clear water, their bodies would shudder with disgust at the horror of what they see in your dirty hollow: the remains of the victims you swallow from time to time! You would flee in shame, plunge into the earth or descend into a pitch-black abyss."

As for me, if luck had blessed me with such astonishing power and abundant water, I would have used them in ways different from yours. I would not have harmed even a small chicken. I would have flowed gently and peacefully among the dwellings and gardens, bringing bliss, relaxedness, and joy to them and to all the valleys, fields, and meadows that were fortunate enough to have me pass through them on my way to the great sea, without taking from them a leaf of their smallest grasses or a flower of their most insignificant herbs.

He said this sincerely, and believed in the truth of what he said.

After a short while, the weather darkened, and the sky became overcast with dense clouds. The stormy thunder roared, and the blinding lightning flashed. Then, heavy rain poured down, and the water channels were filled up. The brook's water rose, and it became a raging torrent, more tyranny than the river. It rushed

forward, foaming and frothing and roaring, sweeping away everything in its path, from towering trees, to animals and people. Even his poor shepherd friend did not escape its wrath, along with his hut and what remained of his flock.



**The Wolf**

**Yearns for**

**Peace**

The wolf said to the magpie, "Goodbye, my dear friend, I've intended to leave this unlucky forest. After I lost hope of getting peace, comfort, and achieving happiness and peace of mind here. All the creatures here hate me and look at me as if I were their arch enemy.

So the magpie said to the wolf, pretending to be saddened by this news in his heart, "And where have you thought of going, my friend?"

To where...?

To any place that takes me away from this detestable forest, I will try to find a remote land, its inhabitants are meeker than lambs, its dogs are more cowardly than sheep, and all its people live

together in familiarity and love, where peace prevails, so I enjoy the pleasure of freedom, and breathe its fresh air, so I do not have to hide by day, and be deprived of the blessing of sleep by night.

The magpie said: Good for you, my friend! But tell me for God's sake, don't you intend to give up your unlovely savagery and take off your sharp tusks before entering this happy land?!

The wolf said: "No, and a thousand times no! How can I live without them?"

The magpie said: "Then be sure that you will never find peace wherever you go."

**The Angry**

**Goose**

A shepherd passed by, driving a flock of geese ahead of him. In his hand, he held a long cane that was constantly moving on the backs of members of the flocks, urging the flocks to hurry up in moving to reach city market in its turmoil movement.

The geese get enraged for this insulting treatment, and their leader blocked the path of the first wayfarer screaming loudly at his face saying: “Look, sir, how this stupid, idiot treats us because he is ignorant of our honorable past, for which we deserve all deference and respect. He has not read the history of the great 'Rome'. To know that our ancestors had credited with saving it from ruins and destruction.

The wayfarer answered the leader, saying: “This is a story that has been circulated and repeated a lot on every one's lips, and

do you think that you, the geese people, deserve people's care and honoring, for what your ancestors and your forefathers did?"

Goose Leader: "Of course! There is no doubt about that, and I think you know that our ancestors..."

The wayfarer: "Yes, yes, I know all that. I have read it in the ancient books; because it happened once upon a time, but tell me for God's sake, what have you or your friends done for people's good and the humanity that makes you aspire to be honored in recognition of your virtue?"

Goose Leader: "We? We ourselves have done nothing, but our ancestors..."

The wayfarer: "Let us leave the memory of the ancestors let it rest in peace with its companions. As for you and the daughters

and sons of your kind, that is the only desired benefit from you  
now it is to satisfy people's stomach with your delicious meat."

Don't say "my lineage" or "my language" ever.

The origin of a young man is simply his endeavors.

