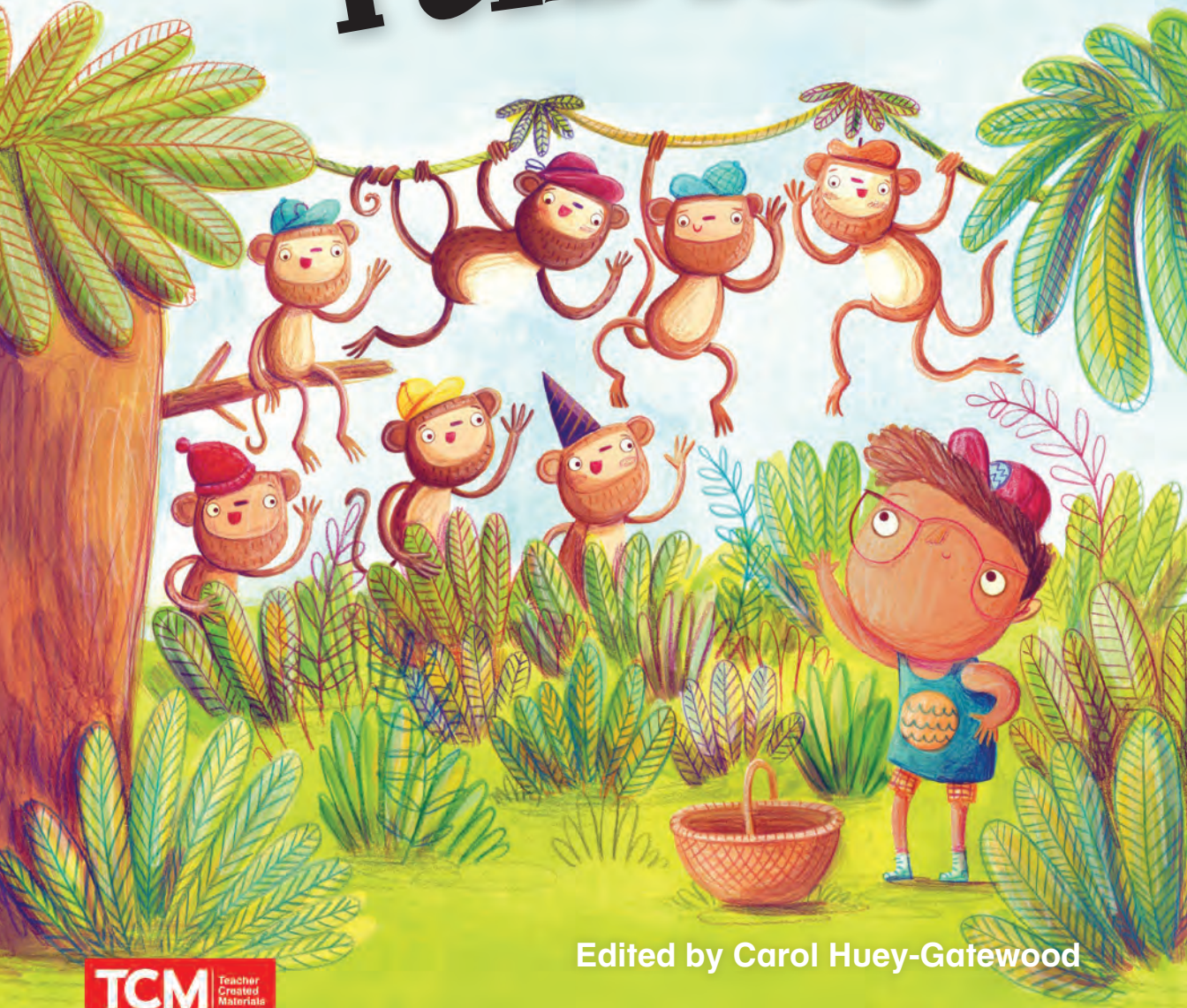
Famous Animal Fables



Edited by Carol Huey-Gatewood

TCM Teacher Created Materials

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The Proud Peacock

At the dawn of time, all the animals in the world got together to decide who would rule over them. The animals of the land chose the lion. The animals of the sea chose the whale. The animals of the sky chose the swan.

In time, the swan king had a beautiful daughter with feathers even more bright and gleaming than his own. When she was young, the king granted her one wish. The swan princess wished that, one day, she could choose her own husband.

When she was old enough, the swan king gathered all the birds so that the swan princess could find a husband who was worthy of her.



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Birds flew from far and wide to meet the swan princess. There were black swans and white swans, geese and ducks, eagles and owls. Soon, the lake was alive with the noisy chirps and twitters of sparrows and starlings, blackbirds and bluebirds, kingfishers and hummingbirds, parrots, macaws, lovebirds, and more!

"Now, my daughter, you may choose whom you wish to marry," said her father.

There were so many beautiful birds, it took the swan princess a whole day to meet them all. Many of the birds were handsome, but one bird caught her eye. It was a peacock with a long elegant neck, an amazing fan of emerald and cobalt blue feathers, and a delicate crown upon its head. She thought the two of them would surely make a fine match!

She went to the king and said, "I choose the peacock for my husband, Father." And the swan king made his announcement: "With so much beauty here, it was a difficult decision, but the princess has chosen the peacock for her husband."



Preview Only



All attention quickly went to the peacock. He proudly puffed up his chest, fanned out his feathers, stretched his long neck, and pointed his beak to the heavens. He began to perform a strange dance. He hopped from side to side, strutted around in a circle, and let out a long squawk. Then, he bent over to show off his splendid tail feathers, wiggling his bottom from side to side at the swan king and princess.

The flock gasped with shock, and some of the younger birds giggled. The proud peacock had gotten so carried away, he had made a complete fool of himself.

The swan king was unhappy to see such behavior. "Peacock!" he cried. "Your pride in winning the princess's heart has made you behave like a shameless show-off. I won't let my daughter marry someone who makes a fool of himself in public.

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You will not be her prince!”
The peacock was so embarrassed, he flew away as quickly as he could, in a flap and flurry of feathers. And that is where the saying **pride comes before a fall** comes from!



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The Greedy Fox

It was a cold harsh winter, and the animals of the forest were hungry—especially Fox, who hadn't eaten a scrap of food for days.

"It's okay for Bear," shivered Fox. "She gets to curl up for the winter in her cozy cave, with a full belly, dreaming of warmer days."

"And Squirrel can't complain!" he moaned. "He's been burying his secret fruit and nut supplies all over the place for months. But a fox? A fox like me has to hunt for food whatever the weather!"

Fox shook the fresh snow from his coat and slumped to the ground. His tummy ached with hunger, but he was so tired and weak that he soon fell asleep.



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He woke later that morning to the sound of someone's footsteps crunching on snow.

He opened his eyes to see a woodcutter pushing a large package into the hollow of a nearby tree. The woodcutter seemed very pleased with his hiding place. He whistled happily to himself and went on his way. He didn't see Fox lying close by, covered in a thick layer of snow.

Fox sniffed the air, hopefully. *I must be dreaming!* he thought. *Is that chicken I smell? Is hunger making me imagine things?*



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Book Club Questions

1. How would the impact of the fables change if the animal characters were human?
2. How do these fictional animals compare with what you know about actual animals?
3. Compare the fables that include humans. What is the role of the humans in each story?
4. Contrast the "Four Harmonious Animals" with "The Lion and the Rabbit." How did the groups of animals work together differently to solve a problem?
5. In "The Farmer's Horse," why did the horse's dance get a different reaction than the puppy's dance?
6. "The Proud Peacock" and "The Greedy Fox" both include a consequence. Do pride and greed deserve such harsh consequences?

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