

## *Lord of the Flies* – Fable

(Latin *fabula* 'discourse, story')

A fable is a **short narrative** in prose or verse which points a **moral**. If the moral is expressed explicitly at the end it is called a 'maxim'. (e.g. "Slow and steady wins the race.") Normally non-human creatures or inanimate things are the characters. The presentation of **human beings as animals** is the characteristic of the literary fable. (e.g. a medieval French fabliaux might feature Reynard the fox as a trickster figure.) The **one-dimensional and flat characters** and **simplistic plot** of a fable leave only little room for argument with the concluding proverb.

The genre probably arose in Greece, and the first collection of fables is ascribed to **Aesop** (6<sup>th</sup> c. BC). The best of the medieval fabulists was **Marie de France** who, c. 1200, composed 102 fables in verse. After her came **Jean de la Fontaine** who raised the whole level of the fable and is generally acknowledged as the world's master. He took most of the stories from Aesop and Phaedrus but translated them in his verse. Mention should also be made of **James Thurber's** droll *Fables of Our Time* (1940) and **George Orwell's** remarkable political satire *Animal Farm* (1945), which is in fable form.

Critics have given different labels to Golding's novels. They have been termed myths, parables, allegories and fables. The choice of the term will depend on the angle of interpretation. Golding himself labelled *Lord of the Flies* a fable and concludes his novel with an essay entitled "Fable". (pp. 249-71)

Æsop

## The Lion in Love

A LION once fell in love with a beautiful maiden and proposed marriage to her parents. The old people did not know what to say. They did not like to give their daughter to the Lion, yet they did not wish to enrage the King of Beasts. At last the father said: “We feel highly honoured by your Majesty’s proposal, but you see our daughter is a tender young thing, and we fear that in the vehemence of your affection you might possibly do her some injury. Might I venture to suggest that your Majesty should have your claws removed, and your teeth extracted, then we would gladly consider your proposal again.” The Lion was so much in love that he had his claws trimmed and his big teeth taken out. But when he came again to the parents of the young girl they simply laughed in his face, and bade him do his worst.

“LOVE CAN TAME THE WILDEST.”

Æsop

## The Fox and the Crow

A FOX once saw a Crow fly off with a piece of cheese in its beak and settle on a branch of a tree. “That’s for me, as I am a Fox,” said Master Reynard, and he walked up to the foot of the tree. “Good-day, Mistress Crow,” he cried. “How well you are looking today: how glossy your feathers; how bright your eye. I feel sure your voice must surpass that of other birds, just as your figure does; let me hear but one song from you that I may greet you as the Queen of Birds.” The Crow lifted up her head and began to caw her best, but the moment she opened her mouth the piece of cheese fell to the ground, only to be snapped up by Master Fox. “That will do,” said he. “That was all I wanted. In exchange for your cheese I will give you a piece of advice for the future—



“DO NOT TRUST FLATTERERS.”