

Insects and People - Entomology 101

Aesop's Fables and The Nez Perce

"*Know Thyself*" - an inscription on the temple of Apollo at Delphi

"*The unexamined life is not worth a man's living*" - Socrates

Aesop (Esop) was a famous fabulist (teller of fables) who may have lived in the sixth century BC or almost 2600 years before present (BP). We have good reason to think that there actually was an Aesop, as writers of consequence such as Herodotus, Plato, and Aristotle mention him. Although no manuscripts of Aesop have survived, ancient writers such as Babrius, Phaedrus, and Avianus gathered and recorded fables they attributed to him. Originally compiled in Greek and Latin, early colonists took the fables with them and spread them throughout much of Europe. Throughout the Middle Ages, the fables were told in many languages with much variation. The first English edition of the fables was published in 1484.

Today, Aesop's fables are read more for pleasure than the value of the lessons that they present. However, the lessons are universal and are at home in any age for they are based upon life itself and the practical wisdom one needs to survive.

Aesop is thought to have been a Greek slave, hunched-back and deaf. He found favor, however, with the gods but was eventually killed by those who could not understand his counsels.

The Entomological Fables of Aesop*

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| Amelia and the spider | The envious glow-worm |
| The ant and the chrysalis | The gnat and the bee |
| The ant and the fly | Jupiter and the bee |
| The ant and the grasshopper | The lion and the gnat |
| The Ape and the bee | The locusts and the grasshopper |
| The bear and the bee hives | The man and the gnat |
| The bee and the cuckoo | The ox and the fly |
| The bee and the fly | The proud lady and the caterpillar |
| The silkworm and the spider | The toad and the mayfly |
| The bee and the spider | |
| The bees, the drones, and the wasp | |
| The dove and the ant | |

*NB: various sources will list these differently or may include others or exclude some.

Selected References

The Nez Perce

Hines, D. M. 1984. Tales of the Nez Perce. Ye Galleon Press, Fairfield, Washington.

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McWhorter, L. V., ed., 1940. Yellow Wolf: His own story. The Caxton Printers, Ltd. Caldwell, Idaho.

Aesop

Keller, J. E. and L. C. Keating. 1993. Aesop's Fables, with a life of Aesop. Translated from the Spanish. University Press of Kentucky. Lexington, Kentucky.

Anthropomorphism - To ascribe human characteristics to non-human species.

Insects to which human traits are often ascribed include:

Honey Bees

Ants

Crickets