



Aesop's Fables

24. THE GOOSE THAT LAID THE GOLDEN EGGS

By Nicky Grischotti

There once was a very poor farmer. So poor he lived in an old tumble-down pigsty in the middle of nowhere, with only acorns and the odd goose egg to eat and a bale of straw for his bed.

His name was Attacus Greeb.

Now Attacus Greeb hadn't always been poor. He'd inherited a large and prosperous farm from his father and he'd owned land as far as the eye could see.

But Attacus Greeb was a lazy man. He didn't like work.

'I'm far too good to be milking cows,' he said. 'I should be Lord of the Manor with servants and footmen...and heaps of silver and gold.'

So over the years, instead of working for a living he'd simply sold off his possessions.

He'd sold almost everything his father had given him - his house, his land, his horses, his pigs, his cattle and all he was left with was one single goose who lived with him.

'Oh what is to become of me?' wailed Attacus late one night. 'I have no house, no food and no money and nothing left to sell...I shall surely starve!'

And then he looked at his goose.

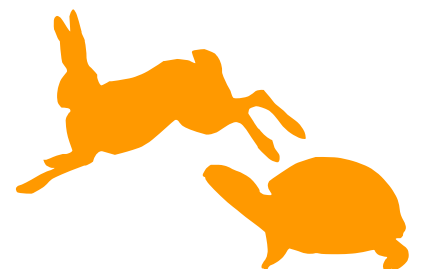
'It's no good honking at me, goosey. It's off with you to the market tomorrow - you haven't laid an egg in weeks and your feathers will fetch me a fair few guineas.'

And off he went to sleep.

The next morning Attacus Greeb awoke to a glittering dawn. It was so light and bright he had to shield his eyes. But it wasn't the sunlight shining. He could hardly believe what he saw: it was a gigantic, glorious... golden egg! 'You clever girl! Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho! We'll be rich! Rich beyond our dreams!'

So off he went to market pushing the egg in an old wheelbarrow... and back he came with a barrowful of meat to cook, chicken feed for his goose and a huge bag of coins.

'Oh how I wish I had money to buy a horse-drawn carriage,' he said patting his full tummy that night. 'That's what I need to be happy.'





Well, the very next morning the same thing happened...there was another shiny golden egg lying beside the goose. So off went Attacus to market and with the money he got he bought a smart black carriage and six sleek horses.

And every day the same thing happened and every day Attacus Greeb counted his money and wished for more and more.

But as fast as the little goose could lay a golden egg Attacus Greeb wanted more.

'Why can't you lay more eggs each day? We need more, we need more I say!'

Soon the farmer became a very rich man indeed - but as he grew rich, he grew greedy - and still he wanted more.

And then he had an idea.

'How I wish I could have all the golden eggs at once,' he thought, 'instead of just one a day. Then I would surely be happy.'

So the next morning he ordered his cook to kill the goose and open it up so he could take out all the eggs at once; but, of course, to his horror there was nothing inside the poor goose...and there would be no golden eggs again.

And Attacus Greeb ended up back in his tumble-down pigsty - just where he belonged! Those who have plenty want more and so lose all they have.