



Aesop's Fables

30. THE DOG IN THE MANGER

By Sharri McGarry

It had been another busy day at the farm. Dog yawned. It was hot, hot, hot! And Dog was tired. He looked around for somewhere to snooze. The barn was shady and quiet.

And in the barn there was a manger and it was full of hay to feed the cows. Ah, yes! The manger was just the right place for a dog to sleep. It was soft and smelled of fresh hay and it was cool in the barn after the heat of the sun.

Dog climbed into the manger and turned around - once...twice...three times - and curled himself into a nest of hay with his nose by his tail.

At that moment, who should come into the barn but Bull and all the cows? 'Time for some dinner, my dears?' said Bull, stepping aside to allow his wives to go into the barn first.

'Oh, thank you dear!' replied Queeny-Cow, daintily strolling in at the head of the herd. 'You are such a gentleman! A nice munch of cool hay would be very nice - OH!'

She stopped when she saw Dog. All the cows stopped when they saw Dog.

Dog didn't open his eyes, but his ears pricked up like satellite dishes.

'Oh dear, said Queenie-Cow, as Bull came up beside her. 'There appears to be a dog in the manger!'

'A dog? A dog?' blustered Bull. 'What would a dog be doing in the manger? Dogs don't eat hay! I say! I say, Dog! What are you doing in our manger?'

'Sleeping,' grunted Dog. 'Go away!'

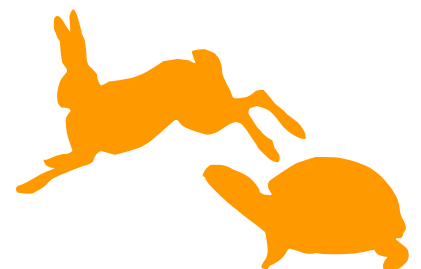
'Well!' said Queenie-Cow in a sulky voice. 'That's no way to behave in front of ladies!'

'You are not ladies - you are cattle,' said Dog. 'That's what you are.'

'Well!' squeaked Queenie-Cow, offended. 'I have never been spoken to in that way!'

'Hrmph!' snorted Bull. 'I must ask you to not speak to my wife that way. She's very delicate, you know! My dear,' he said to Queenie-Cow, 'Leave this to me!'

'Sir!' he continued, lowering his head and displaying his very fine horns, 'I must ask you to leave the manger NOW!'





'Or else?' asked Dog. He rose up on stiff legs, lowered his head and bared his teeth. 'OR ELSE?' he barked.

Bull looked at the fierce dog and backed away in sudden confusion. 'Alright! Alright! Keep your hair on!'

'Attack him!' Queenie-Cow encouraged. 'Don't be cowed!'

'I am cowed!' squeaked Bull, backing away towards the door. 'I have just remembered what my dear old mother always used to say to me! She said "Let sleeping dog's lie!" Goodbye!'

And Bull lumbered out of the barn.

'Well!' said Queenie-Cow. 'So much for him. We'll do this my way!' she said, turning smartly and wandering out of the door.

'Delusional!' muttered Dog, watching the cows nudging out of the barn door. 'Daft!' snorted Dog, turning around three times in the hay. 'Dippy!' decided Dog, curling himself into a nest of hay with a groan of contentment and shutting his eyes.

'DOG!' roared a man's voice.

Farmer John stormed furiously in through the barn door.

'DOG!' he shouted angrily. 'Get out of that manger at once, you selfish animal! There are silly cows milling everywhere they

shouldn't be! I've got cows in my kitchen! I've got cows in my car! And I've got a Bull hiding under my bed! Stop being a dog in a manger and go and round up the sheep!'

Dog jumped down from the hay and skulked out of the barn with his tail between his legs.

'Drat!' he sighed. 'It's a dog's life!'