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Family Plays

AESOP'S CLINIC

A one-act fairy tale by
JOHN TISSOT



AESOP'S CLINIC

Aesop's Clinic is a play that appeals to audiences of all ages. Young children will love hearing the stories, and adults will enjoy seeing them come to life.

Fairy tale. By John Tissot. *Cast: 1m., 7 either gender. Aesop's Clinic* suggests how Aesop happened to write his famous fables. Lively, colorful characters (two foxes, a crow, a tortoise, a hare and two moles) come to Aesop to tell about their adventures: the tortoise and the hare had a race, the fox tried to reach some grapes high on a vine but failed, and so on. The adventures become the fables that we all love so well. *Costumes may be simple or elaborate with a simple stage set, making the play easy to tour. Other creatures could be added for nonspeaking parts. The assistant and all the creatures could be men or women, but the tortoise probably should be a man since he will have to support some weight. Approximate running time: 30 minutes. Code: AG3.*

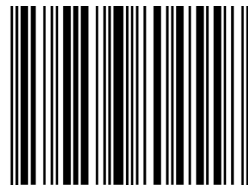
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(AESOP'S CLINIC)

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AESOP'S CLINIC

Characters

AESOP—a man of any age

ASSISTANT—male or female of any age*

CREATURES—Fox A, Fox B, Crow, Tortoise, Hare, Mole A, Mole B

Place: A large room

Time: Long ago and far away

Scene 1: About ten in the morning

*Note to Director: Other Creatures could be added for non-speaking parts. The Assistant and all the Creatures could be male or female, but the Tortoise probably should be male since he will have to support some weight.



Place: A large room

Time: Long ago and far away

ABOUT THE PLAY

How did Aesop come to write his fables? It might have happened like this. Lively, colorful characters make this a fun play for everybody—cast, crew, and audiences. With a simple stage set, it's easy to tour. Playing time is about 30 minutes.

John Tissot lives in California, where he taught school. He has had many novels, short stories, and non-fiction articles published. This is his third title to be issued by I. E. Clark Publications. The other two are **The Antiques and the Valentine Card** and **The Antiques Won't Go Away**.

AESOP'S CLINIC

Scene 1

[The CURTAINS open revealing a simple "Greek-looking" room. AESOP is seated in a simple chair behind a small table. Near his table is another, smaller table with a decorated box on it. On his table there is a notebook, a bottle of ink and a feather (quill) pen. On the other side is a doorway leading to the outside. A rope tied across the doorway prevents the CREATURES from coming in. There is a bench along the wall with the door. The CREATURES can be seen and heard jostling and talking, waiting to get in. The ASSISTANT is standing by the door to make sure the creatures stay out until it is time for them to come in. The ASSISTANT has a list in his/her hand. A chair and a ladder are pushed up against any wall]

AESOP. *[Moves his ink, pen, and notebook around until they are just right. To Assistant:]* You got the list?

ASSISTANT. *[Walks across and hands the list to AESOP, who looks at it and puts it on his desk]* Ready if you are.

AESOP: Ready.

ASSISTANT. *[Goes to the door and unties the rope]* No pushing please. *[Creatures jostle each other and settle on the bench]*

AESOP. *[Consulting the list. To Assistant]* Have Fox come over here. *[FOX A and FOX B stand up]*

FOX A. Which one do you want?

AESOP. There are two?

FOX A. *[Looking at Fox B]* Yes.

AESOP. You'll do. *[FOX A goes to stand in front of Aesop]* Are you Fox?

FOX A. Are these the ears of a fox? *[points at ears]*

AESOP. Yes.

FOX A. *[Pointing]* Does this look like the tail of a fox?

AESOP. Well, yes.

FOX A. Then, unless we're both off the mark today, I'm a fox.

AESOP. And what's your story? *[As Fox A tells his story, AESOP writes in his notebook]*

FOX A. I happened to be near Old McDonald's farm and I was close to where he grows those grapes he's so famous for. And I saw some and they looked good and I thought I'd have some and... *[stops to*

look at Aesop]. What are you doing?

AESOP. I'm writing this down.

FOX A. Why?

AESOP. So I'll remember. Sometimes my memory is like a sieve.

FOX A. Okay. Where was I?

AESOP. [*Consulting his book*] On McDonald's farm wishing you had some grapes.

FOX A. Oh, how I wanted them. Like a dry sponge wants water. You understand what I'm saying?

AESOP. I do.

FOX A. Well, they were up high and [*jumping slightly*] I jumped and I jumped and I couldn't reach them.

AESOP. [*He gets up and goes to his small table and points at the box*] Do you know what's in here?

FOX A. No.

AESOP. Aesop's props. [*Pointing at the table*] You know what this is?

FOX A. [*Shaking his head*] No.

AESOP. It's a fable table. [*He reaches into the box, pulls out an orange, looks at it and throws it back. The same with a pineapple. He finds the grapes and takes them out. He also pulls out some tape. He takes the grapes and tape over to the ladder and pulls it over to the backdrop. He climbs up and tapes the grapes to the top part. He climbs down and pulls away the ladder. To Fox A:*] Now, show me how you jumped. [*FOX A gets under the grapes and jumps and jumps and can't reach them*]

AESOP. So, what did you do next?

FOX A. I stood on my hands like this [*stands on hands*] and tried to reach them with my feet, but I fell over [*falls down*].

CROW. [*From the bench*] Pretty dumb idea, if you ask me.

FOX A. [*Getting up. To Crow*] Well, I wasn't getting anywhere standing on my feet.

AESOP. [*To Fox A*] As I see it, your technique was all wrong. You should have taken a running jump. Go ahead. Try it. [*FOX A steps back, runs and jumps, but misses and falls. He gets up shaking his head*] So what did you do next?

FOX A. I told everybody the grapes were sour and I really didn't want them.

AESOP. [*He goes back to his desk, picks up his pen and writes,*

saying out loud to himself:] Sour grapes. I like that. It has a ring to it. [To FOX A] You can go back and sit down. [FOX A goes back to sit on the bench with the others as AESOP speaks to Assistant] Have Turtle and Hare come over here.

TORTOISE. *[From bench]* I'm Tortoise.

AESOP. Sorry. My mistake.

[TORTOISE and HARE get up from the bench. TORTOISE walks VERY slowly. HARE jumps around. Finally TORTOISE and HARE stand in front of Aesop]

AESOP. What's your story. *[He starts to write as they talk]*

TORTOISE. *[Very slowly]* The... Hare... and... I... were... talking... and...

HARE. Oh, for Heaven's sake. Let me tell it, else we'll be here until the moon turns into green cheese. I told Tortoise that I was so fast that no one would race with me. *[Races in place]* Tortoise said he would.

AESOP. Would what?

HARE. Race me. Weren't you listening? Well, anyway, we fixed the race. From the Cabbage Patch, past McDonald's farm, and ending at the Old Mill Stream.

AESOP. *[To Tortoise]* Is that right?

TORTOISE. Almost... word... for...

HARE. Word!

TORTOISE. Yes. Word... for... *[looks at Hare]*... word.

AESOP. *[To Tortoise]* Show me how you ran.

TORTOISE. How?

AESOP. Yes.

TORTOISE. Okay. *[TORTOISE gets in a running position, and very slowly begins to run. He takes forever to move one foot and then the other]*

HARE. *[To Aesop]* You see what a slowpoke Tortoise is?

TORTOISE. *[Without stopping, but moving very slowly]* Hey... watch... what... you're... saying... All... my... friends... call... me... *[He forgets. Everyone in the room waits expectantly]*

AESOP. *[Prompting]* Call you?

TORTOISE. *[Still moving slowly across the stage]* Swiftly.

AESOP. You can stop now.