The Shepherd Boy and the Wolf

Aesop's Fables – Douglas Perkins – 2020

There once was a shepherd boy who looked after his master’s sheep. For several months of the year, he lived with the sheep in a valley near a dark forest not far from the village. It was his job to keep the sheep from running away, and to protect them from wild animals. Living in the valley was boring, and the only source of entertainment was the songs he played on his pipe. The boy tried talking to his dog, but the dog never replied, and after a while he gave up. Daily life was entirely uneventful, and the boy longed for some excitement.

One day as the boy sat near the quiet forest watching the sheep, thinking about what he would do if he saw a wolf. A plan to cure the boredom came to his mind.

The boy’s master had told him that if he ever saw a wolf, he should cry for help. If the villagers heard his cries, they would come to protect him and the sheep, and they would drive the wolf away. The boy decided that today would be a fine day to see what this looked like, and although there was no wolf to be found, he ran toward the village shouting at the top of his voice, “Wolf! Wolf!”

As he expected, many villagers heard the boy’s shouts, dropped their work, and ran to the pasture in the valley. When they got there, they didn’t find a wolf, and instead only saw a boy rolling on the ground laughing at his wonderful trick. With a few nasty words to the boy, the villagers returned to the village.

A few days later the shepherd boy again shouted, “Wolf! Wolf!” Once again, the villagers ran to help him, and once again he just laughed at them.

A few weeks later, the sun was setting behind the tall pine trees in the forest. The trees cast shadows over the pasture, and the valley began to grow dark. The boy was walking through the grass when he heard a noise. He looked to his left, and there he saw a large wolf. The wolf jumped out of the forest and quickly caught and killed a sheep.

In terror the boy ran toward the village shouting “Wolf! Wolf!” The villagers heard the shouts, but they did not run to help him. They had been tricked twice, and twice was enough.

The wolf killed a dozen sheep, eventually ate its fill, and slipped away into the forest. The boy sat alone in the forest, crying all night long, wondering how to tell his master about the disaster.

*If you start telling lies, nobody will believe you when you tell the truth.*
The Shepherd Boy and the Wolf Questions

PART 1   Match the word and definition.

1. sheep ___  A. move away; direct
2. shepherd ___  B. move quietly away
3. pasture ___  C. shout or scream
4. drive ___  D. a terrible or bad event
5. villagers ___  E. a person who raises sheep
6. slipped ___  F. boss; person who owns the sheep
7. cry ___  G. think something will probably happen
8. disaster ___  H. land covered with grass
9. expect ___  I. people who live in a village
10. master ___  J. a mammal often seen in New Zealand

PART 2   Answer these questions in sentences.

1. What was the boy’s plan to entertain himself?

________________________________________________________________________

2. What did the wolf do when the boy saw it?

________________________________________________________________________

3. What did the villagers do at the end when the boy said there was a wolf?

________________________________________________________________________

4. Did the boy follow the master’s plan for if there was a wolf?

________________________________________________________________________

5. Why did the shepherd boy find life very boring?

________________________________________________________________________