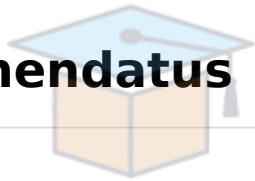


Fantastic Fables

Fantastic Fables by Ambrose Bierce is a witty and satirical collection of allegorical tales that critique human folly, societal norms, and politics with sharp irony and dark humor.

Aesopus Emendatus



Summaryer

In "Fantastic Fables: Aesopus Emendatus," the chapter presents a collection of moral tales that draw from traditional fables but with twists that offer fresh insights or corrections to their original moral lessons. These fables revolve around various characters, both animals and humans, each conveying a specific moral or lesson through its narrative.

"The Cat and the Youth" tells the story of a young man who learns the hard way that disguising one's true nature is difficult and often futile, as illustrated by a cat's failed attempt to act like a human. Similarly, "The Farmer and His Sons" emphasizes the value of hard work and unity, where a dying farmer teaches his sons the importance of togetherness and diligence through the hidden treasure in their farm, which is metaphorically the fruits of their collective labor in farming.

"Jupiter and the Baby Show" humorously depicts the folly of parental bias, showing how even Jupiter, when asked to judge a baby show, cannot help but be partial, suggesting everyone believes their offspring to be the best. "The Man and the Dog" contrasts loyalty and ingratitude, illustrating through a man's relationship with his dog the noble virtues animals can exhibit, which humans often lack.

Other fables like "The Fox and the Grapes" and "The Hen and the Vipers" offer timeless lessons on the nature of desire and the consequences of greed or folly. Each story,

from "The Lion and the Mouse" demonstrating the power of kindness and reciprocal help, to "The North Wind and the Sun" teaching the effectiveness of gentle persuasion over force, encapsulates a moral wisdom relevant across ages.

The chapter maintains the original language and names, keeping the fables' classic and instructive tone unchanged. Through anthropomorphic characters or symbolic situations, these revised fables challenge the reader to reflect on virtues, vices, and the complexities of human (and animal) nature, all the while staying true to the essence of Aesopic storytelling.



Summaryer

The Ingenious Patriot

In "The Ingenious Patriot," part of "Fantastic Fables," a shrewd inventor secures an audience with the King to present his dual inventions that both threaten and promise to protect the realm. Initially, he showcases a groundbreaking formula for armour-plating that he claims is impervious to any cannon fire, suggesting that incorporating this technology into the Royal Navy would render their warships invincible. The value of this invention is corroborated by the King's own ministers, and the inventor offers to sell the rights for a million tumtums.

The King, intrigued and perhaps convinced of the armor's value, agrees to the purchase. However, the narrative swiftly takes a twist when the inventor reveals his second invention: a formidable gun specifically designed to penetrate the previously mentioned unassailable armor. By presenting this paradoxical creation to the King—thereby holding dominion over both the ultimate defense and offense—the inventor demonstrates his loyalty by offering the sovereign first dibs, again for the hefty price of a million tumtums.

Emboldened by the King's interest, the inventor teases yet another invention, a special treatment for the armor that would negate the gun's piercing capability. Before he can elaborate, the King, now wary of the inventor's seemingly endless supply of groundbreaking yet contradictory technologies, commands his Great Head Factotum to search the inventor, revealing him to be in possession of forty-three pockets.

The King's response to this discovery is both ironic and final. He orders the inventor to be shaken upside-down, not only as a comical method of discovery but also as a tactic to confiscate all possible inventions (real or imagined) before sentencing him to death—despite compensating him with forty-two million tumtums for his contributions. This fable satirizes the arms race and the perpetual cycle of creating and countering military technologies, all while poking fun at the greed and opportunism that can drive

innovation in times of conflict.

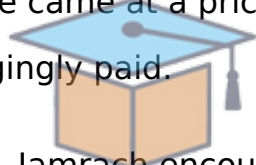


Summaryer

The City of Political Distinction

Jamrach the Rich, eager to reach the City of Political Distinction before nightfall, found himself at a crossroads, uncertain of which path to take. He sought guidance from a Wise-Looking Person by the roadside who directed him to the Political Highway.

However, the advice came at a price, which Jamrach, not one to be easily parted from his wealth, begrudgingly paid.



Summaryer

As he journeyed on, Jamrach encountered various demands for payment. A Benevolent Gentleman at a toll-gate, a Civil Engineer at a bridge over an imaginary stream, and finally, a Ferryman at a dark lake that marked the road's end each required something from Jamrach for passage. The Ferryman, in particular, offered a unique mode of transport: dragging Jamrach across the lake with a noose around his neck, resulting in him being drenched in foul waters.

Upon reaching the opposite shore, Jamrach was informed that he had arrived in the City of Political Distinction, home to fifty million residents who, stained by the lake's black ink, were indistinguishable from one another. Distraught over the loss of his possessions and the unpleasant journey, Jamrach expressed a desire to return. The Ferryman, already pushing off from the shore, informed him that the city lay on the Island of the Unreturning, sealing Jamrach's fate to remain among the indistinct masses.

This fable illustrates the exhaustive and sometimes humiliating cost of achieving political prominence, as well as the irreversible nature of such a pursuit, leaving its chaser forever marked and unable to return to their former life.