Sonya Nevin, "Entry on: Fable Comics by Graham Annable, Gregory Benton, R.O. Blechman, Vera Brosgol, Graham Chaffee, Eleanor Davis, Chris Duffy, Ulises Farinas, Tom Gauld, Sophie Goldstein, Charise Harper, Jaime Hernandez, John Kerschbaum, James Kochalka, Braden Lamb, Roger Langridge, Simone Lia, Jennifer L. Meyer, Corinne Mucha, Mark Newgarden, George O'Connor, Shelli Paroline, Israel Sanchez, Robert Sikoryak [R. Sikoryak] , Ricardo Siri [Liniers] , Maris Wicks, Keny Widjaja", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/558. Entry version as of November 04, 2026.

Graham Annable , Gregory Benton , R.O. Blechman , Vera Brosgol , Graham Chaffee , Eleanor Davis , Chris Duffy , Ulises Farinas , Tom Gauld , Sophie Goldstein , Charise Harper , Jaime Hernandez , John Kerschbaum , James Kochalka , Braden Lamb , Roger Langridge , Simone Lia , Jennifer L. Meyer , Corinne Mucha , Mark Newgarden , George O'Connor , Shelli Paroline , Israel Sanchez , Robert Sikoryak [R. Sikoryak] , Ricardo Siri [Liniers] , Maris Wicks , Keny Widjaja

Fable Comics

United States (2015)

TAGS: Aesop Aesop's Fables Afterlife Architecture Athens Cerberus Charybdis Fable Gods Greek Philosophy Hades Hermes Katabasis Mercury Olympus Phaedrus Poseidon Underworld Zeus



We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.



General information	
Title of the work	Fable Comics
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	United States, United Kingdom
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2015
First Edition Details	Chris Duffy (ed.), *Fable Comics*. New York: First Second, 2015, 124 pp.
ISBN	9781626721074
Genre	Comics (Graphic works), Fables, Fiction, Graphic novels, Humor
Target Audience	Crossover (c.8+)
Author of the Entry	Sonya Nevin, University of Roehampton, sonya.nevin@roehampton.ac.uk

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Sonya Nevin, "Entry on: Fable Comics by Graham Annable, Gregory Benton, R.O. Blechman, Vera Brosgol, Graham Chaffee, Eleanor Davis, Chris Duffy, Ulises Farinas, Tom Gauld, Sophie Goldstein, Charise Harper, Jaime Hernandez, John Kerschbaum, James Kochalka, Braden Lamb, Roger Langridge, Simone Lia, Jennifer L. Meyer, Corinne Mucha, Mark Newgarden, George O'Connor, Shelli Paroline, Israel Sanchez, Robert Sikoryak [R. Sikoryak] , Ricardo Siri [Liniers] , Maris Wicks, Keny Widjaja", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/558. Entry version as of November 04, 2026.

Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Sonya Nevin, "Entry on: Fable Comics by Graham Annable, Gregory Benton, R.O. Blechman, Vera Brosgol, Graham Chaffee, Eleanor Davis, Chris Duffy, Ulises Farinas, Tom Gauld, Sophie Goldstein, Charise Harper, Jaime Hernandez, John Kerschbaum, James Kochalka, Braden Lamb, Roger Langridge, Simone Lia, Jennifer L. Meyer, Corinne Mucha, Mark Newgarden, George O'Connor, Shelli Paroline, Israel Sanchez, Robert Sikoryak [R. Sikoryak] , Ricardo Siri [Liniers] , Maris Wicks, Keny Widjaja", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/558. Entry version as of November 04, 2026.

Creators



Graham Annable (Author, Illustrator)



Gregory Benton (Author, Illustrator)



R.O. Blechman (Author, Illustrator)

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.



Vera Brosgol (Author, Illustrator)



Graham Chaffee (Author, Illustrator)



Eleanor Davis (Author, Illustrator)



Chris Duffy (Author)

Chris Duffy was the Comics Editor at *Nickelodeon Magazine*. He contributed to *Bizarro Comics* (DC Comics). He edited *Nursery Rhyme Comics*, *Fairy Tale Comics*, and *Above the Dreamless Dead*. He edits *SpongeBob* Comics (United Plankton Pictures).

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Sonya Nevin, "Entry on: Fable Comics by Graham Annable, Gregory Benton, R.O. Blechman, Vera Brosgol, Graham Chaffee, Eleanor Davis, Chris Duffy, Ulises Farinas, Tom Gauld, Sophie Goldstein, Charise Harper, Jaime Hernandez, John Kerschbaum, James Kochalka, Braden Lamb, Roger Langridge, Simone Lia, Jennifer L. Meyer, Corinne Mucha, Mark Newgarden, George O'Connor, Shelli Paroline, Israel Sanchez, Robert Sikoryak [R. Sikoryak] , Ricardo Siri [Liniers] , Maris Wicks, Keny Widjaja", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/558. Entry version as of November 04, 2026.

Bio prepared by Sonya Nevin, University of Roehampton, sonya.nevin@roehampton.ac.uk



Ulises Farinas (Author, Illustrator)



Tom Gauld (Author, Illustrator)



Sophie Goldstein (Author, Illustrator)

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Sonya Nevin, "Entry on: Fable Comics by Graham Annable, Gregory Benton, R.O. Blechman, Vera Brosgol, Graham Chaffee, Eleanor Davis, Chris Duffy, Ulises Farinas, Tom Gauld, Sophie Goldstein, Charise Harper, Jaime Hernandez, John Kerschbaum, James Kochalka, Braden Lamb, Roger Langridge, Simone Lia, Jennifer L. Meyer, Corinne Mucha, Mark Newgarden, George O'Connor, Shelli Paroline, Israel Sanchez, Robert Sikoryak [R. Sikoryak] , Ricardo Siri [Liniers] , Maris Wicks, Keny Widjaja", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/558. Entry version as of November 04, 2026.



Charise Harper (Author, Illustrator)



Jaime Hernandez (Author, Illustrator)



John Kerschbaum (Author, Illustrator)



James Kochalka (Author, Illustrator)

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.



Braden Lamb (Author, Illustrator)

Braden Lamb is the husband and artistic partner of Shelli Paroline, together forming an Eisner Award-winning duo who have collaborated on numerous series together. This includes *Adventure Time* (2012-2018, KaBOOM!), *Garfield Homecoming* (2018, KaBOOM!), and *One Day a Dot* (2018, First Second Books) with the writer Ian Lendler. He is a colourist for numerous New York Times bestselling novels, including *Sisters* by Raina Telgemeier (2014, Graphix), *Ghosts* by Raina Telgemeier (2016, Graphix), and *Guts* by Raina Telgemeier (2019, Graphix).

Source:

Illustrator website (accessed: September 2, 2021).

Bio prepared by Emily Booth, University of Technology, Sydney, Emily.Booth@uts.edu.au



Roger Langridge (Author, Illustrator)

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Sonya Nevin, "Entry on: Fable Comics by Graham Annable, Gregory Benton, R.O. Blechman, Vera Brosgol, Graham Chaffee, Eleanor Davis, Chris Duffy, Ulises Farinas, Tom Gauld, Sophie Goldstein, Charise Harper, Jaime Hernandez, John Kerschbaum, James Kochalka, Braden Lamb, Roger Langridge, Simone Lia, Jennifer L. Meyer, Corinne Mucha, Mark Newgarden, George O'Connor, Shelli Paroline, Israel Sanchez, Robert Sikoryak [R. Sikoryak] , Ricardo Siri [Liniers] , Maris Wicks, Keny Widjaja", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/558. Entry version as of November 04, 2026.



Simone Lia (Author, Illustrator)



Jennifer L. Meyer (Author, Illustrator)



Corinne Mucha (Author, Illustrator)



Mark Newgarden (Author, Illustrator)

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.



George O'Connor, photo uploaded by Nxswift. Retrieved from Wikipedia, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0 (accessed: January 5, 2022).

George O'Connor , b. 1973
(Author, Illustrator)

George O'Connor (1973) is an author, illustrator, cartoonist, and graphic novelist from the USA, based in Brooklyn, New York. His work is predominantly aimed at young people and frequently contains historical subjects and themes. O'Connor has cited Walt Simonson's mythology-rich editions of Marvel's *Mighty Thor* as a significant early influence on his own work. His first graphic novel, *Journey into Mohawk Country*, was based on the journal of a 17th century trader. He illustrated Adam Rapp's adult graphic novel *Ball Peen Hammer* (2009). He contributed to First Series' *Fable Comics* (2015, ed. Chris Duffy), a collection of myths retold by cartoonists. Between 2010–2022 O'Connor published the *Olympians* graphic novel series.

In an interview (see here, accessed: April 17, 2015), George O'Connor has said that he wanted the series to be educational. He also said that he spent a long time researching for each title by reading ancient literature to access different versions of myths, and that he consciously tried to avoid reading modern "people's retellings because everybody puts a spin on it. I purposely put spins on the stories too, but I don't want to accidentally steal somebody else's spin".

Sources:

Official website (accessed: October 24, 2018).

Former Author blog (blog no longer updated; accessed: October 24, 20018).

Twitter (accessed: October 24, 2018).

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Bio prepared by Sonya Nevin, University of Roehampton, sonya.nevin@roehampton.ac.uk



Shelli Paroline (Author, Illustrator)

Shelli Paroline is the wife and artistic partner of Braden Lamb, together forming an Eisner Award-winning duo who have collaborated on numerous series together. This includes *Adventure Time* (2012-2018, KaBOOM!), *Garfield Homecoming* (2018, KaBOOM!), and *One Day a Dot* (2018, First Second Books) with the writer Ian Lendler. Shelli is co-director of The Massachusetts Independent Comics Expo (MICE), a local arts festival.

Source:

Official website (accessed: September 2, 2021);

Profile at the goodreads.com (accessed: September 2, 2021).

Bio prepared by Emily Booth, University of Technology, Sydney, Emily.Booth@uts.edu.au

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Sonya Nevin, "Entry on: Fable Comics by Graham Annable, Gregory Benton, R.O. Blechman, Vera Brosgol, Graham Chaffee, Eleanor Davis, Chris Duffy, Ulises Farinas, Tom Gauld, Sophie Goldstein, Charise Harper, Jaime Hernandez, John Kerschbaum, James Kochalka, Braden Lamb, Roger Langridge, Simone Lia, Jennifer L. Meyer, Corinne Mucha, Mark Newgarden, George O'Connor, Shelli Paroline, Israel Sanchez, Robert Sikoryak [R. Sikoryak] , Ricardo Siri [Liniers] , Maris Wicks, Keny Widjaja", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/558. Entry version as of November 04, 2026.



Israel Sanchez (Author, Illustrator)



Robert Sikoryak [R. Sikoryak] (Author, Illustrator)



Ricardo Siri [Liniers] (Author, Illustrator)



Maris Wicks (Author, Illustrator)

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Sonya Nevin, "Entry on: Fable Comics by Graham Annable, Gregory Benton, R.O. Blechman, Vera Brosgol, Graham Chaffee, Eleanor Davis, Chris Duffy, Ulises Farinas, Tom Gauld, Sophie Goldstein, Charise Harper, Jaime Hernandez, John Kerschbaum, James Kochalka, Braden Lamb, Roger Langridge, Simone Lia, Jennifer L. Meyer, Corinne Mucha, Mark Newgarden, George O'Connor, Shelli Paroline, Israel Sanchez, Robert Sikoryak [R. Sikoryak] , Ricardo Siri [Liniers] , Maris Wicks, Keny Widjaja", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/558. Entry version as of November 04, 2026.



Keny Widjaja (Author, Illustrator)

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Additional information

Summary

Fable Comics is a fun and diverse collection of comics retelling fables in a lively, modern style. As many author/illustrators were involved, the fables have many different visual styles; many are rendered in a simplistic or impressionistic style, others are highly illustrated. The majority are told in a humorous tone. Most of the fables are from Aesop, while some are from other traditions. The origin of the story is given as a note at the beginning of each story, e.g. "From Aesop", "From the Angolan fable *Leopard and Other Animals*", "From the Indian fable".

*The Fox and the Grape*s (James Kochalka). The fox wants the grapes, but when he cannot reach them he dismisses them as sour grapes. Retold in a cartoon-sketchy style with a bold palette.

The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse (Tom Gauld). The difference between Town Mouse and cousin Country Mouse is expressed by Town Mouse wearing a jacket, shirt, and tie, as if he has a professional occupation, while Country Mouse goes *au naturel*. Country Mouse leaves as soon as dogs attack them during their first meal, saying "Better beans and bacon in peace than cakes and ales in fear."

Hermes and the Man who was Bitten by an Ant (George O'Connor). This fable is beautifully told in only seven frames. It is one of the less-frequently re-told fables, but has a lot to offer the thoughtful reader. It opens with a man standing by an ant hill, gesturing towards Mt. Olympus and shouting that the gods let humans die regardless of whether they are good or bad. An ant bites him. He stomps on all the ants in the ant hill. A giant foot in a winged sandal stomps on him in turn. Baby Hermes can be seen wiping his sandal clean beside a large placard that reads: The moral is: Watch where you step, or, Irony is lost on the stupid.

Leopard Drums up Dinner (Sophie Goldstein). This is a humorous retelling of the Angolan fable "Leopard and Other Animals". The leopard and his friends are hungry but too tired to hunt. They hold a concert as a way to lure their prey to them. Just as they are about to pounce, a deer requests to play a guest spot. The deer plays drums,

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

shouts a warning that the animals are going to get eaten, smashes the drums and runs away. The leopard and friends look after her nonplussed, and Leopard observes, "She's really bad at the drums."

The Belly and the Body Members (Charise Harper). The various parts of a man's body argue about who does the most work and decide to go on strike. The man finds that he has no energy to do anything and it ruins his birthday.

Lion +Mouse (R. Sikoryak). In this, one of the more popular Aesop's Fables, Lion refrains from eating the mouse that wakes him, and Mouse in turn saves the lion by eating through a hunter's rope. Rather unusually, a sexual aspect is added to the story. With his large mane, the lion is clearly male, but the mouse calls him "she", "madam" ("sir" when caught by the tail), then "your ladyship," with the implication that this is part of the mouse's disrespect for Lion (in addition to jumping on him). Once Mouse frees Lion, Lion is surrounded by hearts and chases Mouse for a kiss. The hunter (a pig), then wonders to the reader "if the lovely lion would have waited for me" if he (the hunter) was smaller. The characters' language is unusual; a combination of stilted grammar ("I are a Lion!"; "What a pretty flowa") and lyrical, ("I'm a torrent of tears and a tidal wave of woe"). This extends the surreal feel of the piece.

Fox and Crow (Jennifer L. Meyer). This is retold with very little text and a highly illustrated style. In an unusual addition, while Fox gets the better of Crow, the story finishes with Crow physically attacking Fox as they disappear into the distance.

The Old Man and Death (Eleanor Davis). This fable is retold in a surreal, relatively grotesque style. The old man complains of aches and pains and wishes for death. Death appears. The old man decides that he does not wish to be taken after all. Death helps him on his way and the old man skips along with a new appreciation of life.

The Boy Who Cried Wolf (Jaime Hernandez). This popular Aesop's Fable is told essentially according to traditional versions, but it is slightly softened at the end as neither the boy nor the sheep get eaten. The boy works to exhaustion to save the sheep but gets no credit from the disbelieving villagers. The come-uppance for the boy is the loss of potential credit for his achievement (rather than the death of the

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

sheep or himself), while there is no downside for the villagers. The visual style recalls mid-twentieth century comics and cartoons.

The Crow and the Pitcher (Simone Lia). This fable is humorously retold, with the addition of a chorus of other animals. The other animals come to Crow for answers to their questions, and Crow answers them reliably. They watch as Crow solves the puzzle of the pebbles and water, initially thinking that he is angry or deranged. They are impressed with Crow when it is able to drink. There is an unrelentingly charming and supportive vibe to this gathering of creatures and the illustrations are rendered in a complimentary naïve style.

Hermes and the Woodsman (George O'Connor). Hermes rewards the honesty of a woodsman who loses his axe, but he will not indulge a second man who attempts to exploit Hermes' kindness by faking a repeat incident.

The Dog and his Reflection (Graham Chaffee). This retelling adds some scenes which help the reader to apply the main moral of the story to the wider world. As the dog carries its bone from the butchers, it sees a boy bullying another boy and stealing his comic. The dog loses its bone when it mistakes its reflection for a rival and barks at it to scare it away from the bone. As the chastened dog slinks away, it passes a man on the phone trying to persuade someone to invest in a scheme. Both human-experience stories caution against greed as a social ill, but it is arguable that the bullying incident actually justifies the dog's jealous behaviour as it seems to confirm that rivals will take your things if you do not fight back.

The Dolphins, The Whales, and the Sprat (Maris Wicks). In this rarely-told Aesop's Fable, wales and dolphins are at war, and the only thing that they can agree on is that they 'would rather die fighting than listen to a sprat like you.' The sprat narrator addresses the reader directly and offers scientific infographics on the make-up of wales and dolphins, how very similar they are, and on the physiological similarity between human arms and flippers. There is an amusing juxtaposition of the factual science and images of fish wearing glasses and whales and dolphins punching each other with arms and fists.

The Frogs who Desired a King (George O'Connor). A group of frogs

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

petition Zeus to send them a king. He sends them a log. They are dissatisfied and ignore Hermes' encouragement to leave the matter alone. They continue to harangue Zeus until he sends them a new king – a snake which promptly eats them.

The Hare and the Pig (Vera Brosgol). "From the Indian Fable". A rabbit resents the attention that a pig is getting for its excellence. He challenges the pig to a competition to prove who is best – they will jump over a muddy ditch. Hare jumps much further, but as they have both ended up in the mud, an observer, Fox, says that it is impossible to say who is the better: "Both in the ditch: can't say which!" (Fox's expression is taken from traditional versions of this fable, as seen in e.g. P. V. Ramaswami Raju's *Indian Fables*).

The Demon, the Thief, and the Hermit (Keny Widjaja). "From the Bidpai", the *Panchatantra*, an ancient collection of animal fables in Sanskrit literature. The Demon and the Thief join forces to steal the Hermit's cow. The Demon and the Thief argue so much that the Hermit escapes bother, just as he predicted.

The Elephant in Favor (Corinne Mucha). From the Fable by Ivan Krilov (also "Krylov", Russian, lived 1768/9-1844, a translator of *La Fontaine's Aesop's Fables* who moved into writing his own fables). A boss exhibits favouritism at work. The other workers grumble to each other about the favouritism and speculate on what it is based on. The favoured employee, an elephant, continues to do well and to be popular because he does his work steadily and is considerate of the others.

The Mouse Council (Liniers). "From the Medieval European fable". A group of mice agrees that a bell should be put around the neck of the cat to warn them of danger, but none of them is brave enough to actually put the bell on the cat. This story uses an enjoyable contrast of styles, highly illustrated and faux-naïve, to distinguish between what the mice are doing in their council and the imaginary scenarios that they bring up in their debate. The tale is told within the frame of a mouse reading this as a bed-time story to its offspring.

Man and Wart (Mark Newgarden) "From *Fantastic Fables* by Ambrose Bierce," (pub. 1899. Bierce, from the USA, lived 1842-1914). A man with a wart on his nose is invited by another man with a wart on his

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood... The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

nose to join his nose wart organisation. The invited man pays, but he pays to be kept *out* of the group rather than to join it. The man who invited him smiles, noting that "it's all the same as if you'd joined." *Man and Wart* is drawn in a sketchy style and as if it were drawn in a lined note-book.

The Milkmaid and her Pail (Israel Sanchez). A milkmaid despairs of her old gown. She determines to whip the milk in her pail into cream and to carry on from there to make her fortune, buy a gown, so that "the boys will not only see me, they'll fight over the chance to give me a bike ride". In determining that she will then turn away from the boys to teach them a lesson, she drops her pail of milk, destroying all her plans and losing what little she had to start with.

The Great Weasel War (Ulises Farinas, Erick Freitas, Marissa Loiuse). "From the Aesop fable, *The Mice and the Weasels*." *The Great Weasel War* transfers the traditional fable to a futuristic sci-fi environment in which mice are being annihilated by large, armour-wearing, robot-like weasel people on an unknown world. One mouse survives by appropriating a weasel helmet and returns home with it. The mice decide to make their own armour to fight back; the mouse who returned home has misgivings. The mice return to the muddy battle-grounds, this time cased in armour. They find that the weasels have adapted to the muddy conditions and are no longer wearing their armour. The armour-clad mice are annihilated.

The Sun and the Wind (R.O. Blechman). When Sun and Wind compete to see who is more powerful, Sun demonstrates that gentle persuasion can be more powerful than force. The story is told through a sketch-cartoon style.

The Hare and the Tortoise (Graham Annable). Irritated by Hare's boasting, a cantankerous Tortoise challenges Hare to a race. Hare stops before the winning line as he does not wish to win without an audience. An eagle picks up Tortoise and carries him off. Tortoise fights back and is dropped at the finish line, pipping Hare to the victory. Tortoise is carried away a champion on the shoulders of other animals, gloating in "rabbit's" face. Hare looks to the reader despondently and says, "Ouch." The story is depicted in a faux-naïve style.

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

The Grasshopper and the Ants (John Kerschbaum). The Grasshopper and the Ants is rendered in a complex cartoon style common to children's literature. Grasshopper plays while the ants work to prepare for the hard times of winter. Grasshopper tells them he has no need to work as he will soon be a big star. He goes away and discovers that he is far less talented than other performers. In sorrow he returns home and finds winter has come. The ants find Grasshopper freezing outside their home. They bring him in and assist him. They then ask if he will stay as his playing improves their working conditions.

The Thief and the Watchman (Braden Lamb and Shelli Paroline). A thief throws a steak to a dog in an attempt to gain entry to a house. The dog verbally rebukes him. The dog hounds the thief wherever he goes, accosting him with articulate arguments for why he, the dog, will not help the thief. The thief drowns as he attempts to flee the dog. He finds himself in Hades, where Cerberus continues the dog's harangue.

Hermes and the Sculptor (George O'Connor). Hermes disguises himself as a human to see how much he is valued by humans by asking a sculptor about statues of gods. He finds he is held cheaply and seems to wish that he had not asked.

The Hen and the Mountain Turtle (Gregory Benton) "From the Chinese fable." The farm chicks harass the turtle, telling it that it is old and smelly and takes up too much room. After some back and forth, the turtle insists that there is enough space on the farm for all the types of animals and the chicks agree.

Demades and his Fable (Roger Langridge). This is a playful way to close the collection. Demades cannot get the public to listen to his views on improving infrastructure so he begins to tell them a fable. They listen, wrapped, as he tells two thirds of it. They ask him for the final third, saying, "What happened to Demeter?" Demades roars in reply, "Demeter says why are you listening to fables when you've got public business to attend to?!" The moral of the story thereby turns towards the reader, who is humorously told to go and do something else (now they have got to the end of the collection).

Editor's Note. The editor, Chris Duffy, lays out what a fable is – "a

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

story with a lesson, usually –not always- starring animals." He explains that it was a conscious decision to have mostly Aesop alongside a few fables from other traditions, although he does not explain why. The contributors had freedom to depict the stories how they liked, "but we asked that a lesson still be in there." A few items of further reading – collections of fables – are recommended.

Analysis

This enjoyable collection demonstrates the variety and skill amongst cartoon artists and brings a playful, humorous quality to the fables while retaining moral lessons. Aesop remains the most represented fable tradition, perhaps owing to the series' emphasis on traditional western stories (nursery rhymes, fairy tales), while nonetheless acknowledging and showcasing examples from other fable-rich cultures. One fable (T*he Mouse Council*, sometimes called "Belling the Cat"), typically erroneously attributed to Aesop, is listed here as a medieval fable, indicating that care was taken regarding the origin of the stories. The inclusion of a reading list empowers people to look into the various traditions further should they wish to.

As well as being drawn in many different styles, the fables are set in a variety of time periods and environments. The cartoonists were free to choose how they depicted the fables. Some include modern features. The fox in *The Fox and the Grapes* uses a "little Fox kung-fu" and a jet-pack to try and get the grapes. This adds humorous hyperbole to the traditional idea of the fox reaching and reaching as high as it can. In *Leopard Drums up Dinner*, the animals wear modern, western clothing and play instruments from a jazz/rock band. *The Belly and the Body Members* is set in a modern environment, as is indicated by the clothing and food choices of the protagonist. *The Great Weasel War* uses a sci-fi fantasy environment which brings a universality to the story.

The Hen and the Mountain Turtle is the only fable to be placed in an explicit context, "Five hundred years ago in western China". *Fox and Crow* features an old-fashioned (perhaps 19th century) coat, blunderbuss, crown and bonnet. *The Milkmaid and her Pail* is set in the early twentieth century, as indicated by the style of the clothing and bicycles. This was chosen perhaps partly so that the job of milk-

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

maid could still exist in a western context. *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* appears to be set in mid-twentieth century USA. *The Mouse Council* is also set in a modern but not contemporary period; the mice wear suits typical of 1940s West. *The Dog and his Reflection* is set in the late 1970s-early-1980s, as indicated by a *Star Wars* t-shirt and a man using a pay-phone wearing an outrageous 1970s suit. By contrast, the pig hunter in *Lion + Mouse* wears ancient-style tunic and carries a quiver of arrows on its back. George O'Connor's retellings appear to be set in the past (according to the characters' clothes), but Hermes uses decidedly modern language (e.g. "What's up, Doc?"; "bummer"; "super-busy"). This seems to be used to help express Hermes' youthful, irreverent nature, as well as adding a playful connection between the ancient and modern worlds. *The Thief and the Watchman* does something similar; the story is set in the ancient past, but modern features – such as a dog collar with tag – add a humorous, domesticating touch. *Demades and his Fable* is also depicted in antiquity, with knowing modern touches. Demeter, wishing to cross a river, for example, regrets the absence of her "inflatable Charybdis" – referring to the monstrous whirlpool of the *Odyssey*. There are also sandwiches and a Π (letter pi)/pie joke. Presumably the cartoonists worked in whatever period they felt most comfortable depicting, or which they thought would work best for the tale, and the fact that this led to such variety gives the collection a lively, diverse feel and brings a sense that the fables apply to human foibles across time and space.

The contributors chose different ways of communicating the morals of their stories. *The Fox and the Grapes* and *The Old Man and Death* leave the reader to deduce the moral for themselves. Similarly, *The Great Weasel War* asks the reader to deduce the moral from the way the story unfurls without explicit didacticism. In *The Belly and the Body Members*, the lesson that all parts of the body are necessary is not stated but not hard to deduce, although a young reader might struggle to extend this into a body-politic metaphor. Similarly, a character in *Man and Wart* voices the basic moral to another character, but a young reader might struggle to extend their understanding to the wider point being made.

The Town Mouse and The Country Mouse brings out the sense that each mouse prefers what they are used to, while suggesting preference for the Country Mouse's view of the situation (as per

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Babrius, *Fable 108*). Country Mouse's expression, "Better beans and bacon in peace than cakes and ales in fear" paraphrases Babrius and appears in other versions of the fable. "Cakes and ale" as a reference to good living passed into use in Latin literature (e.g. Horace, *Satires*, 2.6), and into English, e.g. Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (Act 2. Sc.3), and the title of W. Somerset Maugham's novel of 1930. In *The Demon, the Thief, and the Hermit*, it is the character of The Hermit who voices the moral at the end of the story, as if explaining it to his student. In *The Thief and the Watchman*, the dog reiterates diverse aspects of the moral over and over again, tormenting the thief. Cerberus finishes with the final summary, his great size and super-natural quality giving him – and therefore the moral - a definitive authority.

In *Hermes and the Man who was Bitten by an Ant*, *Hermes and the Woodsman*, and *The Frogs who Desired a King*, George O'Connor makes the morals explicit by having them stated on their own cards at the end of the stories, typically held up by baby Hermes. The visual style in these fables is carried over from the *Olympians* series (see elsewhere in this database). In some cases, the morals are phrases in multiple versions, which adds nuance: e.g. "Be happy with what you have, or, beware of what you wish for." This is playfully subverted in *Hermes and the Sculptor,* where Hermes himself is the butt of the humour. The main moral note, "Artists are stupid", is clearly not the traditional moral, but one which an indignant Hermes would find apt. "Art is dead", "...blockhead" and so on, in a great pile of moral notes indicates that this episode has really irritated Hermes, and there is humour in him taking it so badly. In this case, Hermes as moral-bearer inadvertently reveals the over-arching traditional moral, that it is better not to investigate how one is valued.

In *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*, the moral is presented by the narrator ("There is no believing a liar, even when he tells the truth"). Similarly, the moral comes from the narrator in *The Elephant in Favor*. In *Lion +Mouse*, the hunter character raises the moral of the story mid-way, "The biggest is not always the best", and repeats it explicitly to the reader at the end, "Moral: Little friends may prove great friends." Characters also raise the moral in *The Crow and the Pitcher*. One asks self-referentially, "Do you think there must be a moral to this story?" and another answers, "Yes. It is that necessity is the mother of invention."

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood... The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

The Dolphins, The Whales, and the Sprat leaves the reader to deduce the traditional moral – that arguing parties will turn on a peacemaker. It adds bonus science lessons and an added moral, namely that it was good that the sprat attempted to make peace, even if it failed. This second lesson adjusts the story's moral to make it more palatable to a modern-world which, theoretically, places a great value on peace-making. *The Grasshopper and the Ants* softens the traditional moral of the fable in a similar way. The lesson that one should plan ahead for difficult times is communicated by the Grasshopper's painful experience. The ants show kindness in sharing with the grasshopper, as is common in modern retellings. This is taken further, in that the ants' kindness is shown to have a practical as well as moral value - the ants work better when they can enjoy the grasshopper's playing. This makes a strong utilitarian case for the value of art in society. A very modern warning is also expressed within the tale. While the Grasshopper's music is valued by society (the ants), the Grasshopper learns that dreams of finding rapid fame whilst having little skill or knowledge of the music industry is a dangerous fallacy. Thus a story with the moral that one should not only play but work makes a case for play as work while also cautioning against ill-informed versions of that play, as, it is implied, epitomised in televised singing competitions offering rapid rags-to-riches.

Fox and Crow subverts the message of its story, so that while the reader and Crow realise that Crow has been at fault in being vain and overly susceptible to flattery, Fox is ultimately punished and made the figure of ridicule for having been too manipulative and unkind. This is another instance where a modern value priority – unkindness being worse than vanity – has been worked into the traditional material. *The Hare and the Tortoise* subverts the moral of the fable, but in a way that runs counter to the tendency to soften stories to reflect values deemed appropriate for modern children. This fable retelling takes the unusual approach of making Tortoise a humorously unlikable and bad-tempered figure. Typically in retellings for children, the tortoise is a sympathetic figure and everyone learns a lesson about being a good sport as well as the moral about steadiness being better than rushing. Here the modern "good sport" message is undermined by the anti-hero Tortoise and the reader may well feel some sympathy for the chastened Hare.

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

The Dog and his Reflection does not subvert the moral, but perhaps undermines it, as described above in the summary section. *The Sun and the Wind* also prefers not to be bound to the usual moral. The basic moral is made explicit by the narrator through a caption which reads, "MORAL: Gentle persuasion is better than force", while a sub-caption "(sometimes)" is added beneath.

The Hare and the Pig also undermines the usual moral. The fable usually begins with the decision to compete, not, as here, with Pig having superior status. Envy of Pig's status becomes the motive for the competition, but it nonetheless complicates the narrative in other ways. The typical moral of this fable is that one should avoid competitions in which one may be degraded (i.e. traditionally as both are covered in mud, they have both failed, regardless of who jumped furthest). The extended moral is that if one is good at something – as hares are good at jumping – one should be extra careful about how one competes in that field – there is more shame in failing when you fail despite achieving more than your unskilled rival. But in this case, although skilled-jumper Hare is shamed by losing a jumping competition, *Pig* had more to lose than Hare. Pig loses the respect of the other animals and ends up covered in mud, bow-tie and all. This would suggest that it was Pig who should have been more cautious as it is Pig who has thrown away its prestige. Yet this is undermined by the last frame of the story, in which Pig observes, "Hey, you know this mud really isn't so bad!'; pigs like mud after-all. Readers may find themselves unsure what the overall moral is; perhaps, ultimately, both animals should have been more cautious, and the lesson is that one should be reluctant to enter into unnecessary rivalry whatever it is that one has to lose.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aesop Aesop's Fables Afterlife Architecture Athens Cerberus Charybdis Fable Gods Greek Philosophy Hades Hermes Katabasis Mercury Olympus Phaedrus Poseidon Underworld Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures,	Animals Character traits Death Emotions Gaining understanding Good deeds Good vs evil Humour Judgement Learning Philosophy

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Psychology Relationships Socialisation Storytelling Talking animals Values

Further Reading

Babrius and Phaedrus Fables, trans. B.E. Perry, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1965.

Cooper, Kenneth, "Aesop's Fables for Adults", *Peabody Journal of Education* 33.3 (1955): 143–147.

Daly, Lloyd, R. (trans. ed.), *Aesop Without the Morals. The Famous Fables, and a Life of Aesop*, New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1961.

Finch, Chauncey E., "The Greek Source of Lorenzo Valla's Translation of Aesop's "Fables"", *Classical Philology* 55.2 (1960): 118–120.

Hall, Edith, "Our Fabled Childhood: Reflections on the Unsuitability of Aesop to Children", in Katarzyna Marciniak, ed. *Our Mythical Childhood… The Classics and Literature for Children and Young Adults*, Leiden: Brill, 2016.

Hall, Edith, "Aesop the Morphing Fabulist", in Owen Hodkinson and Helen Lovatt, eds., *Classical Reception and Children's Literature. Greece, Rome and Childhood Transformation*, I.B. Tauris: London, 2018, 89–107.

Addenda

Part of a series of comics created from traditional stories, also including *Nursery Rhyme Comics* and *Fairy Tale Comics*.

Blackwell's Synopsis (accessed: October 24, 2018):

From classics like "The Tortoise and the Hare" and "The Grasshopper and the Ants" to obscure gems like "The Frogs Who Desired a King", "Fable Comics" has something to offer every reader.

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Sonya Nevin, "Entry on: Fable Comics by Graham Annable, Gregory Benton, R.O. Blechman, Vera Brosgol, Graham Chaffee, Eleanor Davis, Chris Duffy, Ulises Farinas, Tom Gauld, Sophie Goldstein, Charise Harper, Jaime Hernandez, John Kerschbaum, James Kochalka, Braden Lamb, Roger Langridge, Simone Lia, Jennifer L. Meyer, Corinne Mucha, Mark Newgarden, George O'Connor, Shelli Paroline, Israel Sanchez, Robert Sikoryak [R. Sikoryak] , Ricardo Siri [Liniers] , Maris Wicks, Keny Widjaja", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/558. Entry version as of November 04, 2026.

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.