

This illustrated book is a collection of 12 fables with talking animals and good life lessons for children. It follows the tradition of fables established long ago, and the animal characters provide important lessons for children.

The Dog and the Butterfly and Other Fables

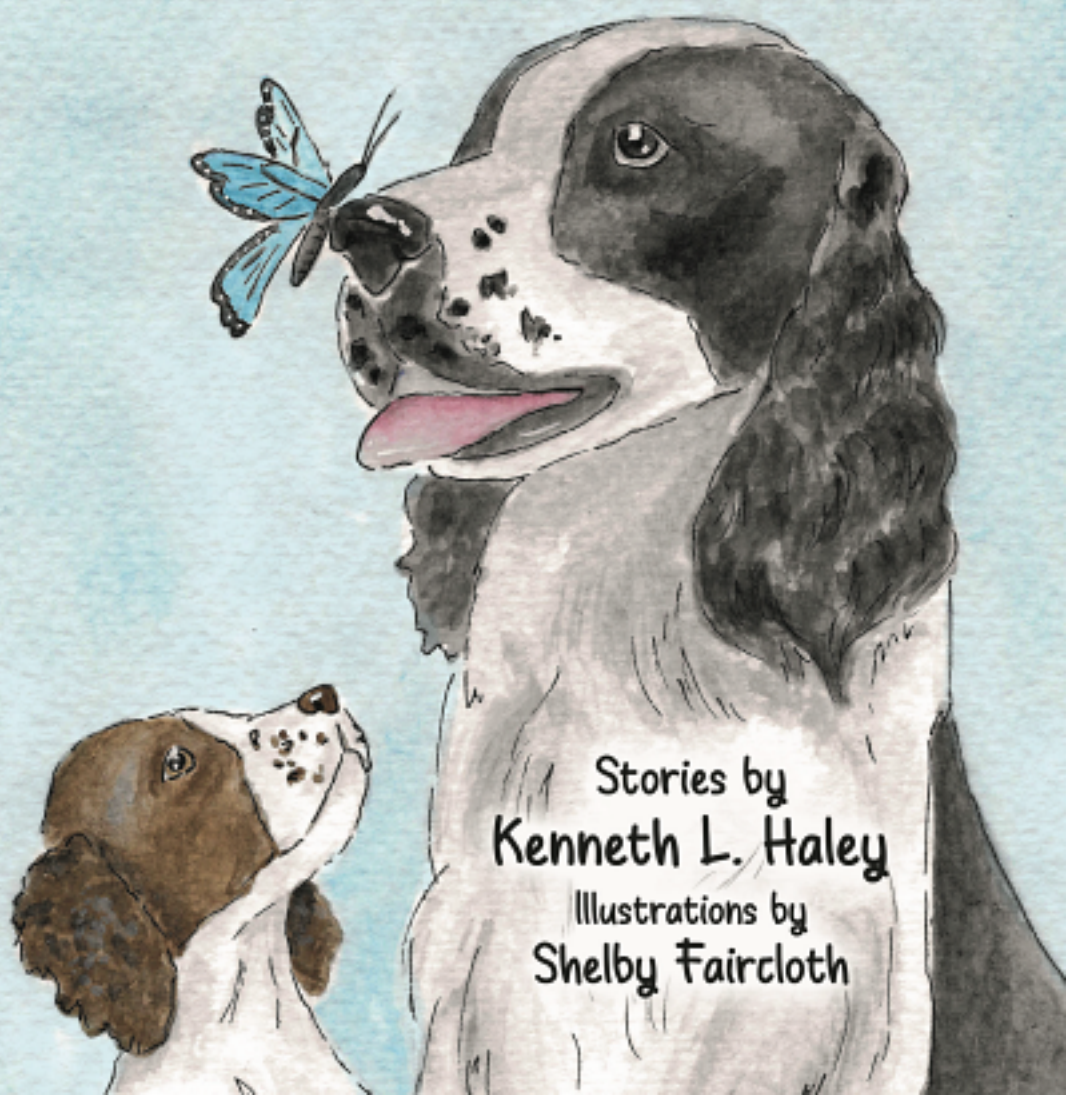
By Kenneth L. Haley

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The Dog and the Butterfly and Other Fables



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First Edition

The Dog and the Butterfly



An old dog slept soundly on the steps by the front door. Sarge, the dog, was a faithful dog, and was loved by his people, but he was well past his prime. Years ago he had loved to run and play with the children and hunt with his master, but the children were grown and gone, and his old master seldom hunted now. So, old Sarge spent most of his time sleeping by the door on his favorite mat.

The mat by the door was a good place. He could see if anyone came or left the house, and flowers bloomed nearby along the side of the house in summer and spring, so it smelled like a fresh garden. All in all, it was not a bad place, very quiet and peaceful most days.

One spring day in May, he saw his old master return to the house with a box. This was not unusual, but as he came closer Sarge thought he heard a noise coming from inside the box. His hearing was not as sharp as it had once been, but as he slowly rose and walked over to meet his master, he was sure he could



hear something in the box. He thought he smelled something as well. Sure enough, when his master set the box on the ground and he could see inside, something alive was indeed in the box!

Sarge sniffed, and looked, and woofed. It looked like a dog, but it was small! It was a puppy! Old Sarge sniffed again and put his nose up to the hole. The puppy hesitated, but then did the same thing and they touched noses through the hole. Old Sarge circled the box a couple of times and then went back to his favorite place by the door.

Sarge didn't think much about it until an hour or so later when he woke from a nap and found something tugging at his ear. It was the puppy, of course. Sarge gave him a quick warning growl and tried to rescue his nap, but each time he closed his eyes and thought about taking a little snooze, that troublesome pup inched his way back and nosed a foot or tugged an ear or sniffed his nose again. Finally, Old Sarge took a snap at the young pup to put him in his place, but even that did not last long. The young pup just curled up beside him by the door.

Old Sarge did not like sharing his favorite place with an unknown newcomer. He pretended to stretch in such a way as to push the pup off the steps. Plunk! Yip! The pup fell off the edge but quickly scrambled back up the steps to regain his position by the old dog. Sarge pretended to go back to sleep, but he kept one eye on the troublesome pup. Shortly after, the pup went to sleep, and they both got some rest.

His old master put the pup back in the crate for the night, so at least Sarge did not have to put up with the pup tugging and pulling on him all night, but the crate was much too close to his mat on the steps. Oh, the noise! The pup cried and wailed and yipped most of the night. Old Sarge put his paws over his ears, but that did not help much. The wailing and crying went on into the night while

poor Sarge tried every sort of position, but nothing helped. Sarge absolutely refused to leave his mat because of some young pup! This was his place, his guard duty, his faithful service to the family, and no wet-behind-the-ears pup was going to run him off! No Sir!

And so, it was a long night, but finally the pup cried himself to sleep and old Sarge could get some rest as well.

The next morning seemed to come a bit earlier than usual. His old master opened the crate and released the troublesome pup again. As soon as he was out, the pup made a dash for old Sarge and latched onto one ear. Instinctively, Old Sarge snapped at the young pup and sent him rolling backwards.

“Sarge,” said his old master, “Stop it!”

Sarge lowered his head and just settled back down onto the mat, sulking. Sarge sat there for a moment, thinking. Clearly the pup was going to stay, like it or not. It was not a good situation, but he would have to make the best of it. It was, however, a beautiful spring day with the sun shining and the birds chirping, and the pup was keeping a little distance for the moment at least.

Old Sarge had almost slipped into a good nap when he heard something jumping and running nearby. Yip! Yip! As he opened a sleepy eye, Sarge could see the pup running and jumping after something. As his tired old eyes focused, Sarge could see the pup was chasing a butterfly, a beautiful butterfly floating on a breeze, bobbing up and down. The pup was having a wonderful time jumping and chasing without really wanting to catch the butterfly. And as he watched, Sarge remembered. He, too, had done this as a pup. It had been a long time ago, but yes. He remembered now. It was a wonderful time and he had not thought of this in many years.

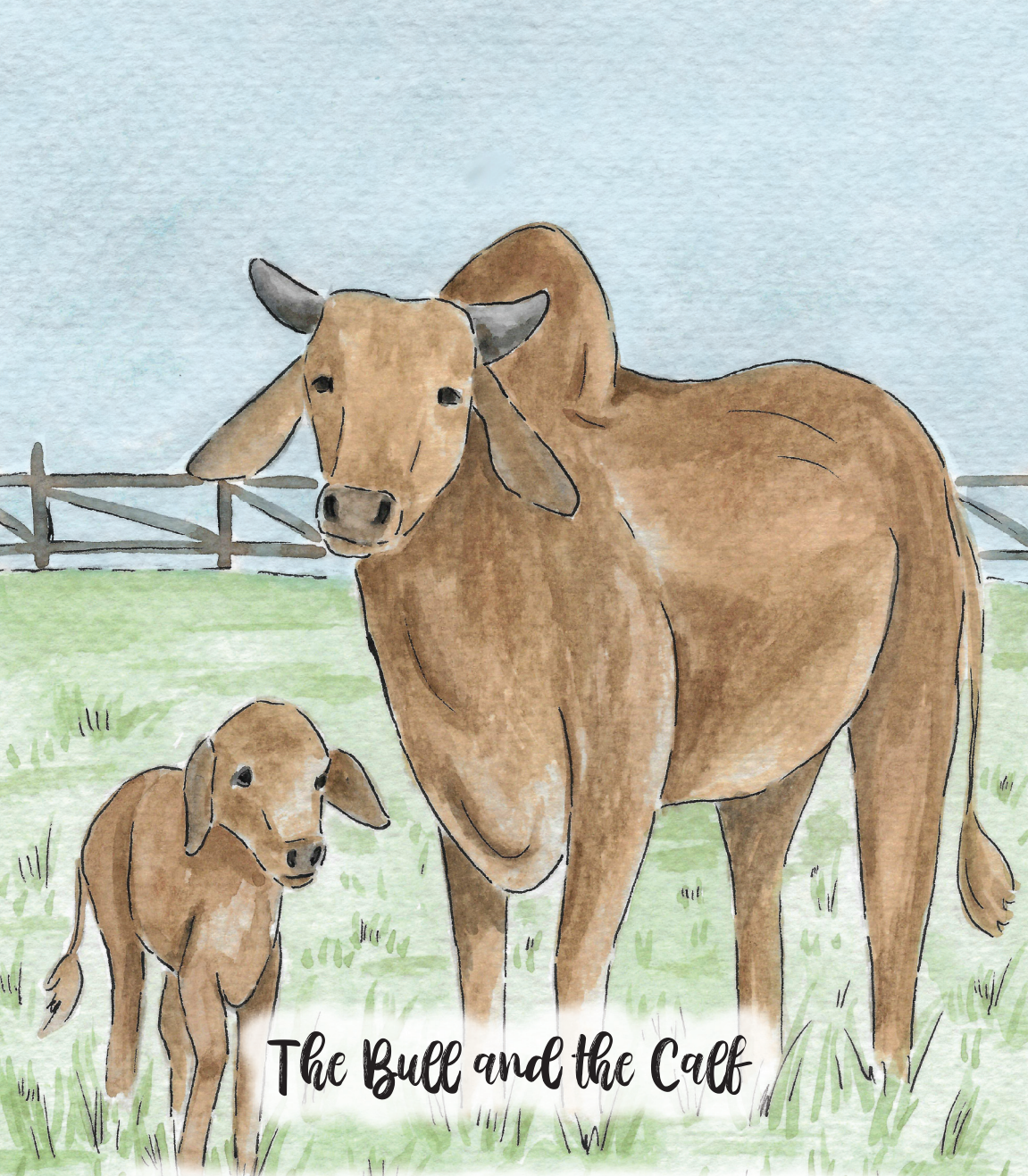
Old Sarge stood up off his mat and stepped onto the ground. He stood a little straighter, and he walked a little stronger as he

made his way toward the pup and the butterfly. Just as he got there and stopped, the most amazing thing happened. The butterfly flitted about and landed right on Sarge's nose! Sarge froze where he stood. The pup stopped immediately and watched in awe. The butterfly just sat there on Sarge's nose, slowly flapping its wings, up and down, up and down. It was beautiful beyond expression, and if an old dog can smile, that was what the young pup saw.

The butterfly took off again into the wind, but the old dog just stood there a moment looking at the pup. He did not growl. He did not bark or snap at the pup. He stood content as if to say:

“You set free
The butterfly
In me.”

When his old master came out later to check on the pup, he found the two dogs curled up next to each other on the old mat.



The Bull and the Calf

Old Roy was a handsome Brahma bull. He was tall and strong and weighed nearly 2000 pounds. He and his herd of cows were happy in their pasture, and old Roy took care of them. No coyotes or panthers or even stray dogs came into the pasture for long if Old Roy saw them. The cows would also chase off roaming animals to protect their calves, but Old Roy was always on guard.

Even people had to be careful coming into the pasture. He liked his owner well enough since he brought feed and hay to all, but Old Roy did not care much for strangers. In fact, his owner had posted a sign on the fence right next to the “No Trespassing” sign which said “If you ignore the other sign and try to make it across the pasture, be sure you can do it in less than 20 seconds. The bull can make it in 21.” His owner had read the sign to him when he put it up, and Old Roy seemed to stand a little taller when he heard it.

In any case, Old Roy had many calves in the pasture, his children in human terms. They tended to look a whole lot like him with ears which were a little long and a bit of loose skin under the neck. They were good looking calves, healthy and strong. They would romp through the pasture running and playing with each other much like human children. And just like human children, they would make their mamas come after them now and then. When the calves were very young, one cow would act as a babysitter to several small calves while the other mama cows went off to eat, and they would trade off babysitting days just like people do.

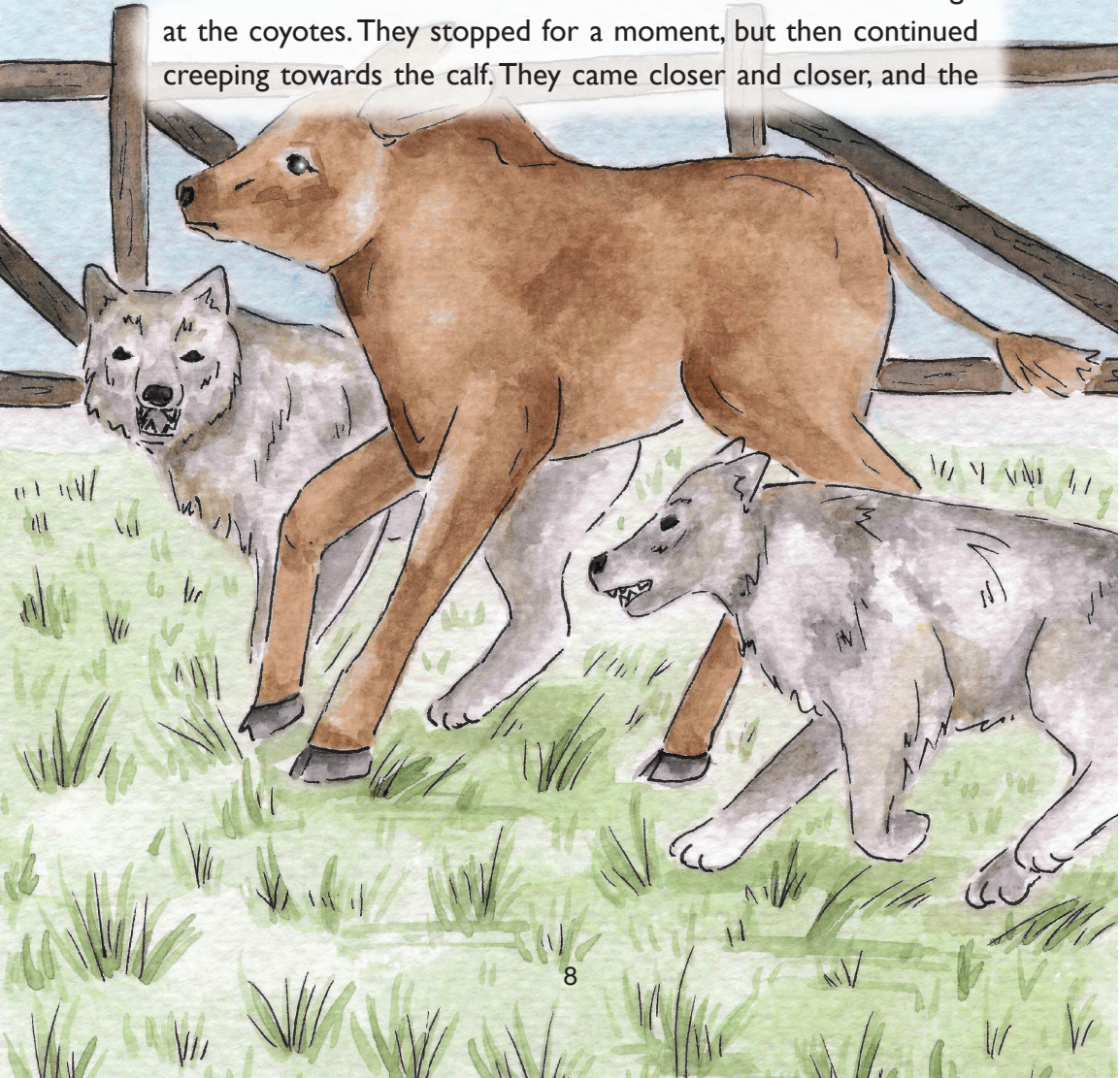
Old Roy watched all this from his favorite spot under an old tree in the middle of the pasture. He would sometimes mingle with the cows, but he would often just sit under his favorite tree watching. It was a nice spot on a little rise with a big oak, and he could see nearly the entire pasture.

As the calves got a little older, they tended to wander off a little more, much like human kids do. One young bull calf in particular liked to wander over to Old Roy and try to play with him. Old Roy did not pay much attention to the calf, and the calf would wander off again to find someone more willing to play. The calf would chase a squirrel or run after birds if no one wanted to play.

One fine day as the young calf was out chasing birds, he found himself at some distance from the herd. This was not unusual, and he

could still see them, but they were a little further off than usual. Just as he had finished chasing a flock of blackbirds, he looked up to see four coyotes watching him from the fence line. One of them growled and crawled under the fence. The calf knew they were not supposed to be in the pasture, and he also knew they could be dangerous. But he was a bull calf! Son of Old Roy! And so, he pawed the dirt with his front hooves and snorted his best at the encroaching coyotes, for by now all four were in the pasture and creeping up on the calf. He snorted again and pawed the dirt into the air and tried to look as big and mean as he could, but the coyotes kept coming.

The calf became concerned and even tried a small charge at the coyotes. They stopped for a moment, but then continued creeping towards the calf. They came closer and closer, and the



calf decided to really charge this time just like he had seen Old Roy charge. And so, he did, but instead of turning and running, the coyotes sidestepped the charge and tried to nip at his heels! In fact, they closed in around him and began nipping at him from all directions! He kicked and he butted, but there were too many! Finally, one managed to nip his heel. The calf had never been bitten before, and it hurt! He let out a bellow that resounded across the pasture, and turned to run back to the herd, but the coyotes now stood between him and the other cattle. He had nowhere to go!

Old Roy was almost asleep under his favorite tree when he heard the calf bellow. In an instant, he was on his legs and running towards the sound, for the bull calf was bellowing repeatedly by this time with four coyotes nipping at him from all directions. Old Roy was a cloud of angry dust charging across the pasture, like a whirlwind with the fury of a tornado. The coyotes, busy as they were harassing the calf, did not see him until it was almost too late. Indeed, one of them caught a head butt which sent him flying toward the fence. The other three tumbled over themselves yelping and trying to make their way back to the fence line, barely escaping the wrath of Old Roy. They did not stop after crossing the fence either, but kept on running until out of sight. Old Roy stood at the fence snorting and pawing the ground until he could see them no more.

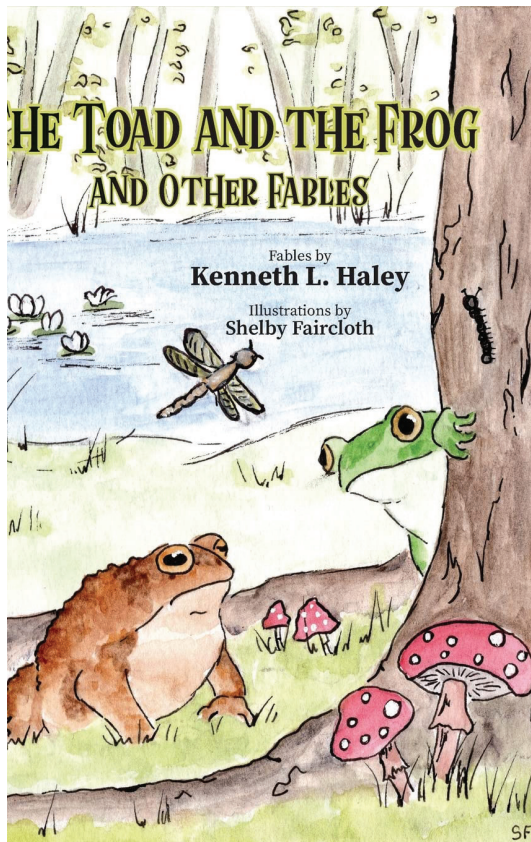
The calf, having suffered much more in pride than in any physical way, slowly walked over to where Old Roy stood.

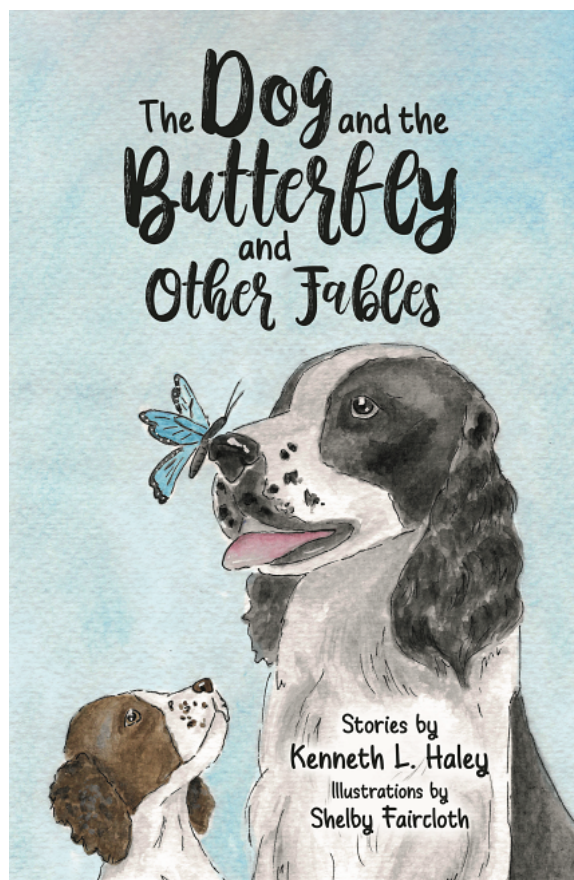
"I tried to scare them away," said the calf. "But I could not. They were not afraid of me and might have eaten me if you had not come. I am no good for this, and I can never do what you do."

Old Roy looked down at the sad calf. "You are young, but you will grow, and you will be fine. Remember, it is not what you are now that matters. It is what you will become." And with that, they rejoined the herd, and Old Roy took his place under the old oak again.



“Also available, ‘The Toad and the Frog and
Other Fables’ by the same author.”





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