

## Before You Read

# *The Lark and Her Children and The Travelers and the Bear*

## Connect to the Fables

Think about how it feels to really need help with something. What are some times in life when you rely on others?

**Quickwrite** Freewrite for a few minutes about situations in which you have counted on others for help. What have you learned from those situations?

## Build Background

Folktales and fables often contain proverbs. Proverbs are sayings that offer advice or state a well-known truth. Proverbs are usually short and easy to remember, and they often contain vivid images. Here are some proverbs that you may already know:

- "The early bird catches the worm."
- "Birds of a feather flock together."
- "Every cloud has a silver lining."

## Set Purposes for Reading

### **BQ** BIG Question

As you read, pay attention to the problems that the characters face and how they deal with them.

### **Literary Element** Fable

A **fable** is a short, simple tale that teaches a lesson about human nature. The characters are often animals that speak, think, and act like people. The moral, or lesson, of the story is usually stated directly.

Understanding fables is important because such tales can teach values or give advice. As you read, think about the purpose and characteristics of each fable and what it teaches you.

### **Literature Online**

**Author Search** For more about Aesop and Jerry Pinkney, go to [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com) and enter QuickPass code GL29763u1.

### Learning Objectives

For pages 86–89

In studying these texts, you will focus on the following objective:

**Literary Study:** Analyzing fables.

## Meet the Authors



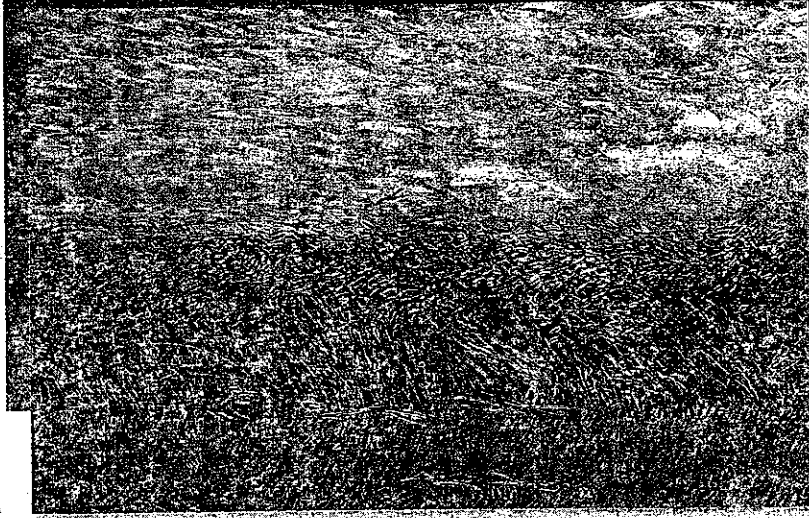
### Aesop

**Author or Legend?** Aesop is traditionally credited as the author of many ancient Greek fables. However, the fables may have been invented by different people. They were first written down in the fourth century B.C.

### Jerry Pinkney

#### Author and Illustrator

Jerry Pinkney is an award-winning illustrator and reteller of folktales.



# The Lark & Her Children

Aesop's Fables  
Retold by Jerry Pinkney

*Wheatfield with Lark, 1887. Vincent Van Gogh. Oil on canvas. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.*

**A** lark made her nest in a field of young wheat. By the time her eggs hatched, the wheat had grown straight and tall. All summer long the wheat ripened and grew golden while the young birds grew in size and strength.

The fledglings<sup>1</sup> were nearly ready to leave the nest when they heard the farmer talking to his sons. "The wheat's ripened at last," he said. "We'll call our friends and neighbors in to help us harvest it."

The little birds were frightened that their nest might be destroyed, and when their mother returned to the nest that night, they told her what they'd overheard. "Never fear, my children," the lark replied. "We still have some time left. Practice your flying and make sure your wings are strong."

A few days later the young larks once again heard the farmer talking. "That wheat must be harvested at once," he said. "We can't wait any longer for help from our friends. Tomorrow we'll set to work ourselves."

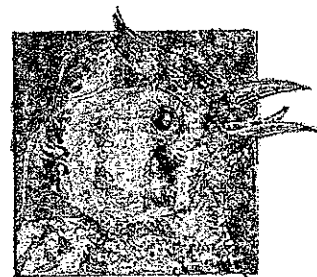
When her children told the lark what the farmer had said, she answered, "Then it's time for us to be gone. For once a man is ready to do his own work, there will be no more delay."

*If you want something done, do it yourself.*

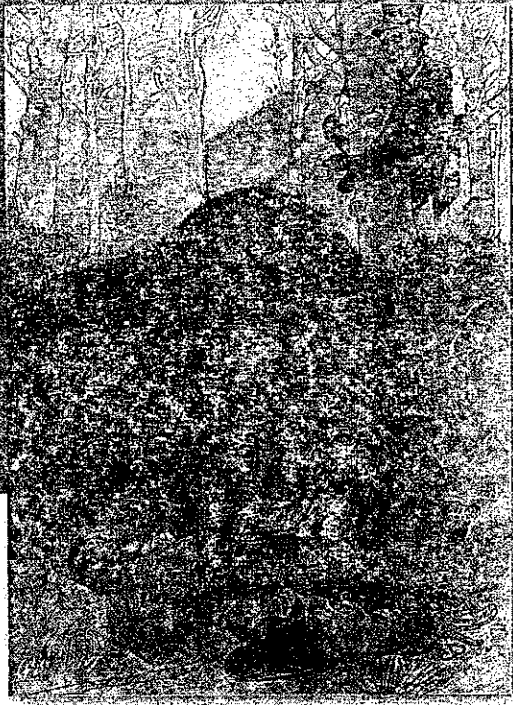
<sup>1</sup> *Fledglings* are young birds.

### Visual Vocabulary

A **lark** is a small, brownish-colored songbird.



**Fable** What characteristic of a fable is this?



# The Travelers and the Bear

Aesop's Fables

Retold by Jerry Pinkney

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Two men were traveling through the forest together on a lonely trail. Soon they heard a sound up ahead as if heavy feet were trampling through the underbrush.

"It could be a bear!" one whispered with alarm, and quickly as he could, he scrambled up a tall tree. He had barely reached the first branch when a huge brown bear thrust aside the bushes and stepped out onto the path.

Hugging the trunk with both arms, the first traveler refused to lend a hand<sup>1</sup> to his terrified companion, who threw himself on the ground and prepared for death.

The bear lowered its great head and sniffed at the man, ruffling his hair with its nose. Then, to the amazement of both men, the fierce beast walked away.

The first traveler slid down from his tree. "Why, it almost looked as if the bear whispered something in your ear," he marveled.

"It did," said the second traveler. "It told me to choose a better companion for my next journey."

*Misfortune is the true test of friendship.*

<sup>1</sup> To lend a hand means "to help."

## BIG Question

Can the second traveler count on the first traveler? Why or why not?

## After You Read

### Respond and Think Critically

1. In "The Lark and Her Children," why are the young birds frightened? Explain. [Recall]
2. In "The Lark and Her Children," why does the farmer decide that the wheat must be harvested at once? Explain. [Infer]
3. Do you agree or disagree with the lesson of "The Lark and Her Children"? Support your answer with good reasons. [Evaluate]
4. Do you think that the bear in "The Travelers and the Bear" actually spoke to the second traveler? Why or why not? [Conclude]
5. **Literary Element** Fable Which fable do you think is more effective in teaching its lesson? Explain. [Compare]
6. **BQ** **BIG Question** What does "The Travelers and the Bear" teach readers about friendship? Explain. [Conclude]

### Academic Vocabulary

In "The Travelers and the Bear," the first traveler probably believes he is **justified** in not helping his companion. In the preceding sentence, *justified* means having a sufficient or logical reason for doing something. Do you think the first traveler is justified in not helping his friend? Why or why not? Would you have helped him?

### Writing

**Write a Scene** The settings of fables are usually rural villages. Many fables do not include a description of these settings. What do you think these villages are like? Write a scene in which you describe the setting for one of these fables. Use sensory details in your description, appealing to all five senses if possible.

### TIP

#### Evaluating

To answer question 3, you must consider the details of the story as well as your own ideas, opinions, and experiences.

- Start by reviewing the details of the story. Can the farmer count on his friends and neighbors? Identify the moral of the story.
- Think about what you know from experience. Can others always be relied on?
- Decide whether your experience supports or contradicts the moral of the story.

**FOLDABLES** Study Organizer Keep track of your ideas about the **BIG Question** in your unit Foldable.

LOG  
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Literature Online

#### Selection Resources

For Selection Quizzes, eFlashcards, and Reading-Writing Connection activities, go to [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com) and enter QuickPass code GL29763u1.