



Fables of La Fontaine - Illustrated by Gustave Dore

Jean de La Fontaine

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This volume in large format (8.5 x 11 inch) encompasses the 12 books of the 240 Fables (plus introductions and epilogues) written by French poet Jean de La Fontaine, first published between 1668 and 1694 and here translated into English with notes and an explanatory preface by Elizur Wright. Of course, La Fontaine's special dedications to the King of France and to some members of the French noblesse, and introductions that accompanied certain fables are here transcribed and translated in full.

Each and every of the fables are illustrated with a sketch plus a vignette by famous French artist and engraver Gustave Doré. Also, 89 large plates illustrate the best known fables, including some which were not published in the original Doré's printing of 1867. So this edition reunites all at the same time the exhaustive collection of the *Fables of La Fontaine* and all illustrations Gustave Doré has ever drawn for it.

Most of La Fontaine's fables were in the main adapted from the classical fabulists Aesop, Babrius and Phaedrus. Elizur Wright's translations of the Fables are in prose; so their reading claims a consistent knowledge of the English tongue. Notes by the translator come to explain particular words, allusions and their origins that couldn't be fully understood otherwise, as for their historical and literary contexts whenever it is necessary. We changed the preface by the author Jean de La Fontaine for Elizur Wright's, which tell us more on the true origins and meanings of the fables.

The reproductions of the sketches, vignettes and large plates by Gustave Doré have been done on the basis of a selection among the best we found in several original copies, since one may notice variations in contrast from one original printing to another. After we scanned them in high resolution, we fixed the small scratches and various imperfections of printing visible on any original copies, and we reviewed their contrasts so as to reconstitute their depths often lost due to insufficient inking during the printing process. For the making of this book, we have been all along anxious to publish the best version of the *Fables of La Fontaine* illustrated by Gustave Doré.

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