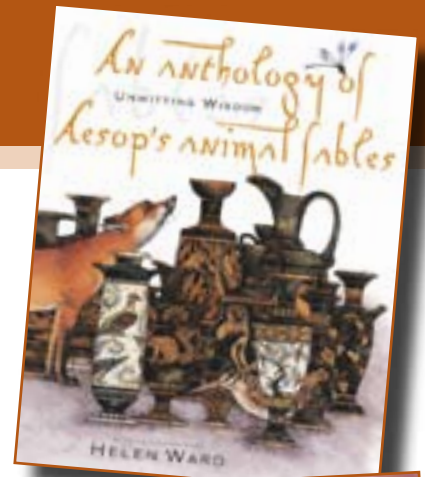


Helen Ward

- ❖ *Unwitting Wisdom: An Anthology of Aesop's Animal Fables*
- ❖ *The Cockerel and the Fox*



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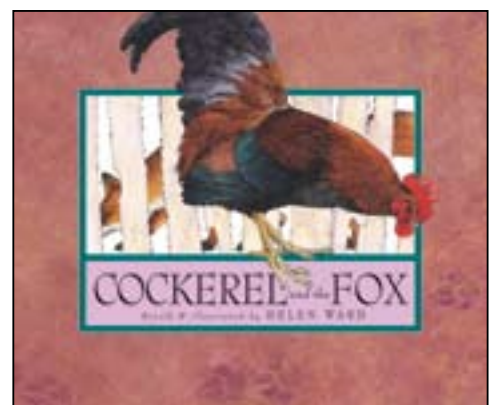
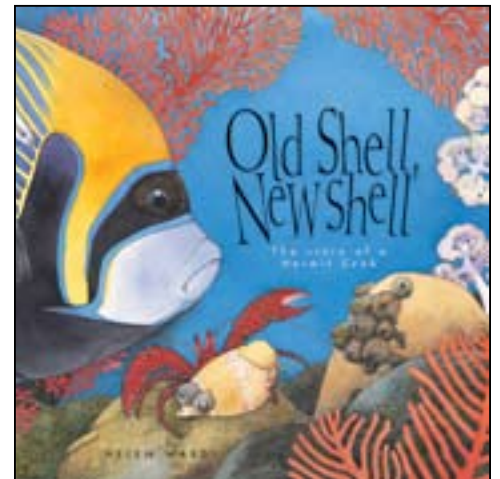
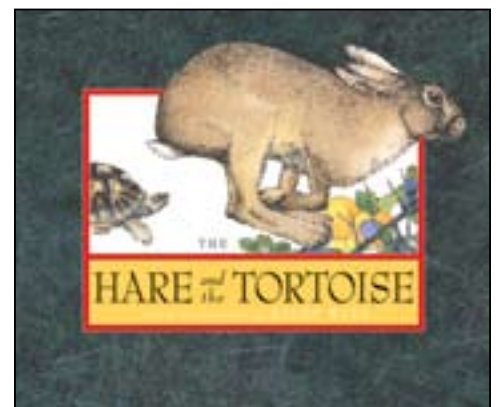
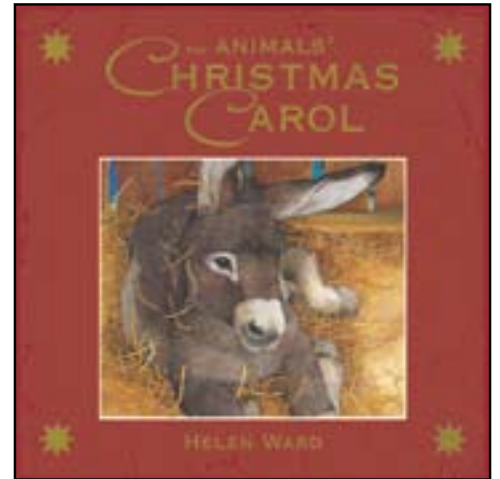
1. Helen Ward



■ HELEN WARD

Helen Ward trained as an illustrator at Brighton School of Art, under the direction of well-known children's illustrators such as Raymond Briggs, Justin Todd, Chris McEwan and John Vernon Lord. In 1985, her final year at Brighton, Helen was awarded the first Walker Prize for Children's Illustration.

Awards for Helen's work include The National Art Library Awards both in 1998 and 2001, first for *The Hare and the Tortoise* and then her version of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* in the Templar Classic series. She was shortlisted for the prestigious Kate Greenaway Award in 2003 for *The Cockerel and the Fox*. This book also won an award in the children's trade category at the British Book Design and Production Awards presented in November 2003. Helsen's story *The Boat* won the UKLA Children's Book Prize 2006.



2. Book Notes

2. a. *Unwitting Wisdom: An Anthology of Aesop's Animal Fables*

The Tales

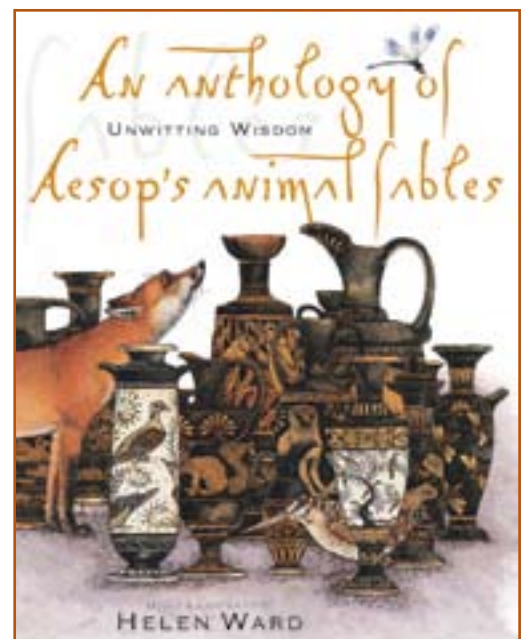
This large format book comprises 12 animal fables from Aesop:

- *Sour Grapes*: It is easy to despise what you cannot obtain
- *The Trappings of Power*: The more honour, the more danger
- *All Dressed Up*: Fine feathers do not make fine birds
- *Pot Luck*: Harm seek, harm find
- *A Time to Dance*: Do not put off until tomorrow what you should do today
- *A Dinner Invitation*: Do as you would be done by
- *Steady and Slow*: Slow and steady wins the race
- *Upon Reflection*: Be grateful for what you have
- *Size Isn't Everything*: It holds through the whole scale of creation that the great and the small have need, one of the other
- *Not Flying, But Falling*: Accept your limitations
- *Fools Gold*: Those who want everything may end up with nothing
- *Hard Cheese*: Beware of false flattery

Characters

All the characters are animals which are used to represent human characteristics e.g.:

- Fox – cunning and sly
- Hare – boastful
- Tortoise – slow and steady
- Crow – subject to flattery
- Jackdaw – vain
- Goose – greedy



2. Book Notes

Narration/Point of View/Style

Third person narration in the voice of the traditional storyteller e.g. The opening "There once was..." is used to begin every story in the collection and is also used for Helen's biography. The non-specific nature of time or place reinforces the timeless, universal aspect of the stories.

Elevated, poetic style is employed, e.g. "He wanted just for once to look down on the earth and to enjoy the vast freedom of the high thin air where the eagle circled, master of the sky." (*Not Flying, but Falling*) "He breathed upon the mouse the very breath of doom" (*Size isn't Everything*)

Illustration

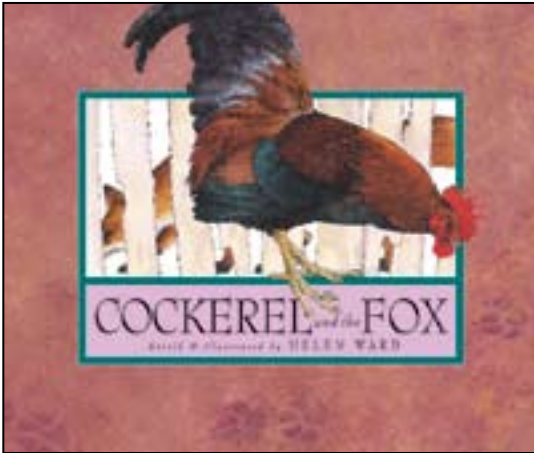
Helen worked in watercolour using a fine brush to pick out detail and black pen work.

The point of view in the illustration varies (e.g. the reader is on eye level with the lion in *Size Isn't Everything*)



2. Book Notes

2. b. *The Cockerel and the Fox*



Synopsis

Chanticleer the cockerel has a dream about a terrible beast. Soon after, a fox enters the farm yard. Chanticleer is alarmed, but the fox quickly manages to put him at his ease. Flattering the vain bird, the fox tricks him into crowing and then, when Chanticleer's eyes are closed, he grabs him by the throat and runs back to his den

with the farm animals in pursuit. The animals declare that he is the cleverest of all creatures. The fox opens his mouth to reply and Chanticleer escapes!

A retelling of a traditional story, familiar from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and the fables of La Fontaine.

Characters

- Chanticleer, the vain cockerel
- Pertelote, his adoring mate
- The fox
- A cast of rare breed farm animals

Setting

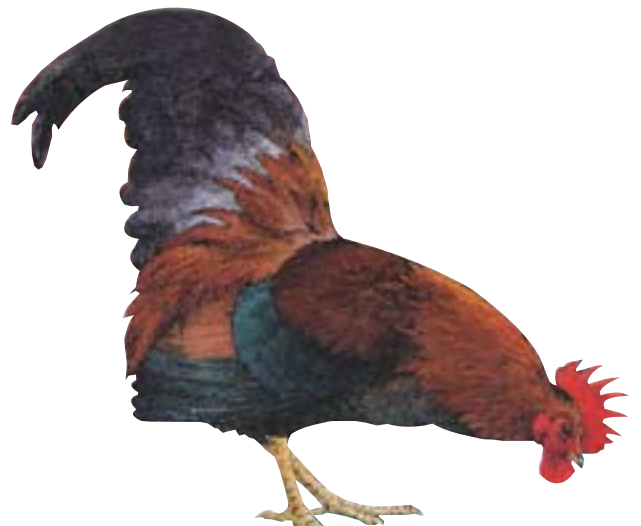
- A farmyard in an unspecified time, e.g. "Over the rolling hills, beyond the wood, there was once a small farm."

Narration

Traditional, third-person storyteller, e.g.

"And so it was..."

"...for the fox and his prize had slipped beneath the gate"



3. Curriculum Context

These notes are most appropriate for children at the top end of KS2 (years 5 & 6), though the ideas can be adapted for use with younger children. The literacy framework specifically recommends that pupils study fables in year 3 and year 5. *Unwitting Wisdom* and *The Cockerel and The Fox* are suitable for using with pupils in either year group. Pupils studying art in secondary school will also benefit from some of the suggestions.



4. Author/Illustrator Study: Helen Ward

Before studying the books in detail, give the pupils an overview of Helen's work and set up a stimulus display in the classroom. You might read the biographical notes at the end of *Unwitting Wisdom*, which are written in the same traditional storytelling voice as the fables: "There was once a little girl..."

HELEN WARD'S BOOKS

AUTHORED AND ILLUSTRATED BY HELEN

- *The Animals' Christmas Carol*
- *Old Shell, New Shell*
- *The Hare and the Tortoise*
- *Unwitting Wisdom*
- *The Cockerel and the Fox*
- *The Tin Forest*, (illustrated by Wayne Anderson)
- *The Dragon Machine*, (illustrated by Wayne Anderson)
- *Twenty Five December Lane*, (illustrated by Wayne Anderson)
- *The Boat* (illustrated by Ian Andrew)

TEMPLAR CLASSICS, RETOLD BY HELEN

- *Wind in the Willows*, by Kenneth Graham
- *The Just So Stories*, by Rudyard Kipling
- *White Fang*, Jack London

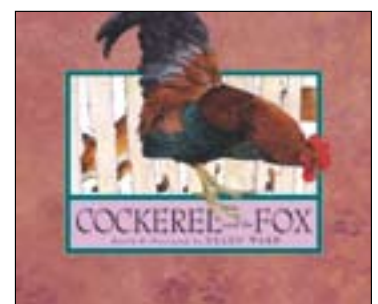
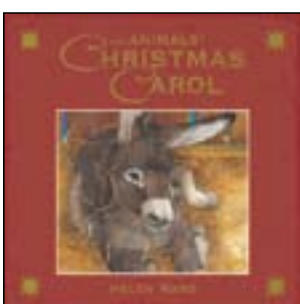
COLLABORATIONS WITH OTHER ILLUSTRATORS

- *Moon Dog*, (illustrated by Wayne Anderson)

TEMPLAR'S OLOGIES™

(collaborating with other illustrators)

- *Egyptology*
- *Dragonology*™
- *Pirateology*™
- *Wizardology*™



5. Teaching Ideas

5. a. Literacy ideas based on *Unwitting Wisdom*

■ What are fables? (2/3 lessons)

Objectives

- To find out what pupils already know about fables.
- To provide pupils with an understanding of fables and their features.

Introduction

- Ask the class to brainstorm the word 'fable', perhaps in pairs, and discuss what they have written down. Use this information to draw up a class list of features that can be added to later. This could be done on the interactive whiteboard and saved for later additions. Alternatively, use a large piece of card or paper.
- Discuss the fables the pupils already know, e.g. *The Hare and the Tortoise*; *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse*.

Development

- The idea that fables have a moral and always feature animal characters may be suggested by the pupils. If not, guide them to consider what the fables might have in common. Discuss what a moral is and consider the reasons Aesop might have used stories to explain or illustrate a moral.
- Use a range of dictionaries to look up definitions of 'moral'. Write the definitions on large sheets of paper and display them in the classroom.
- Choose one of the stories from *Unwitting Wisdom* (e.g. *The Hare and the Tortoise*).
 - Provide each group with a selection of morals, real and invented (e.g. don't rush about; Don't fall asleep; Slow and steady wins the race; make sure you get off to a good start, it helps to have a hard shell).
 - Read the story aloud – or have copies available for children to read in pairs or small groups.
 - After reading, ask each group to choose the moral that they think goes with the story. Discuss choices and encourage pupils to justify them with evidence from the text. The most able pupils in the class can create their own morals.

5. Teaching Ideas

- Split the class into groups and ask each group to choose an animal that features in *Unwitting Wisdom* e.g. fox, hare, tortoise, cricket, crow, wolf, sheep etc.
 - Ask them to either draw or find pictures of the selected animal.
 - Ask them to label the picture with the characteristics they would expect that animal to have (see below):



- Discuss each animal with the class and whether anyone can add to another group's ideas.
- Display the work in the classroom for reference when reading the fables. Does the animal in the fable have the characteristics that we expect or not? In what ways do they meet/confound expectations?

Conclusion

- Review what has been learnt about fables.
- Consider why fables might have been told and who would have heard them. Share ideas.
- Explain that in the next lesson they are going to learn about Aesop.

5. Teaching Ideas

■ Who was Aesop? (1 lesson)

Objectives

- To present information about Aesop and consider why he told his stories.

Introduction

- Start with a game of Chinese Whispers. Give one pupil a long or tricky phrase ask them to remember it and whisper to the next pupil and the next and so one. Ask the last pupil who receives the message to repeat it. Was it the same? How had it changed? Where did the changes take place?
- Explain to the class that there are no records that Aesop ever wrote down his fables. So how do they still exist after all this time?
 - Discuss oral storytelling with the class.
 - What advantages and disadvantages are there to oral storytelling?
 - Are there any frequently told 'family stories' that might be told often but are never written down?
- Choose one of the fables from *Unwitting Wisdom* and tell it orally (without reading the text). Now ask the pupils to work in small groups to retell the story. They should sit in a circle. One person starts to tell the story and when they have told as much as they want, the story is passed to the person on their left. An object can be passed around the circle to signify the story being passed along.

Development

- Although not much is known about Aesop, this website provides some easy-to-read background information: http://www.kyrene.org/schools/brisas/sunda/fab_fables/aesop.htm
- Discuss the fact that the original audience for these stories would have been adults, yet now they are mainly read by and to children. Why do they think that this is the case?
- Why is an owl an appropriate bird to illustrate on the page in *Unwitting Wisdom* that tells us about Aesop?
- Why is the collection called *Unwitting Wisdom*?

5. Teaching Ideas

Conclusion

- Ask pupils to work in groups and discuss/write their thoughts on the following questions:
 - Read and reflect on Helen Ward's dedication, "To Aesop and all tellers of moral tales who, despite a monumentally ineffective history, still gently try to point the human race in a better direction."
 - If Aesop lived today, what morals would he want to convey? Would they be the same or different? What remains the same? What has changed?
 - Could he still tell stories using animals?
 - Would oral storytelling still be used to convey these morals? What other means of storytelling are available to us in the 21st century?

■ Reading and Responding to the Fables in *Unwitting Wisdom* (3/4 lessons)

Objectives

- To develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the fables collected in *Unwitting Wisdom*.
- To develop pupils' discussion skills and encourage them to have a personal response to what they have heard.
- To encourage all pupils to write and illustrate their own fable.
- To publish a class collection of fables.

Introduction

- Read a selection of Helen Ward's elegantly written and beautifully illustrated fables. You might take a theme, such as fables that all have a fox in them – or fables that have similar morals, e.g. greed. The following suggestions are based on the fables that feature a fox.
- Ensure that children have access to the book or use a visualiser to project the pages as you read.
- Read and discuss *Sour Grapes*.
 - Was the fox doing anything wrong?
 - How does the rest of nature contrast with the fox's frustration, e.g. discuss sentences such as, "...butterflies flew by with casual ease, while on the ground below the fox lay panting and exhausted."

5. Teaching Ideas

- Consider what is added to the telling by personifying the tree: "Everything about the tree was unhelpful. It refused to so much as twitch a twig when he tried to shake it."
- Why does the fox decide that the grapes must be "Horrid, disgusting, revolting, inedible, indigestible"?
- Reflect on the meaning of the moral "It is easy to despise what you cannot obtain."
Invite pupils to draw on their own experiences – to think of a time when they have been determined to obtain something or go somewhere and it has been denied them. Have they really wanted to go to a party, not been invited and decided that it would have been a really bad party anyway?
- Make a glossary of new vocabulary, e.g. inedible, indigestible.
- Read and discuss *A Dinner Invitation*:
 - Was the fox being a bad host?
 - Why do you think that he was doing this?
 - How should a good host behave
 - Is the stork's behaviour acceptable?
 - What does the moral "Do as you would be done by" mean
 - Invite pupils to think of other morals or sayings with similar meanings, e.g. 'An eye for an eye'; 'One bad turn deserves another'. Ask them if they know other morals that contradict the moral of this story, e.g. 'turn the other cheek'; 'two wrongs don't make a right'. You might extend this work by having a debate between those who favour the moral, 'do as you would be done by' and those that favour the moral, 'Two wrongs don't make a right'
 - Make a glossary of new words (e.g. tantalised, sumptuous, perplexed). Encourage the children to use these words in their own writing.
- Read and discuss *Hard Cheese*:
 - The crow was uneasy at the presence of the fox; how did the fox get him to overcome this unease?
 - Notice the narrative reminds us that this is just a story: "When a fox wandered into the story."
 - Can pupils think of other morals that could be applied to this story, e.g. 'pride comes before a fall'?

5. Teaching Ideas

Activities for all fables

- **The fox:**

- What does each fable tell you about the fox's characteristics?
- Add suggestions to the posters of characteristics produced in Activity 1.

- **Beginnings**

Discuss the sentences that Helen Ward uses to start her fables:

- "*Sour Grapes*, in which a fox tries to hide his disappointment with insults";
- "*A Dinner Invitation*, in which a fox is a bad host and a hungry guest";
- "*Hard Cheese*, in which a fox persuades a crow out of his lunch".

- **...and Endings**

Compare the morals that conclude each fable. What is the effect of having the openings and the morals framing the story?

- **Language**

- Consider how this retelling compares to another version e.g. *The Fox and the Grapes*
<http://www.aesopfables.com/cgi/aesop1.cgi?sel&TheFoxandtheGrapes2>
- *The Fox and the Stork* <http://www.bartleby.com/17/1/19.html>
- *The Fox and the Crow*
<http://www.pagebypagebooks.com/Aesop/Aesops Fables/The Fox and the Crow p1.html>

- Helen Ward's retellings are more detailed, poetic and descriptive. Discuss the meaning of words/phrases that might be unfamiliar, e.g. '*inedible*', '*the shadows had lengthened*', '*an all too apparent gusto*', '*mellifluous*' etc.
- Invite pupils to suggest favourite phrases and sentences. These can be written on large sheets of paper and displayed.
- Alliteration, e.g. '*twitch a twig*' in *Sour Grapes*. What effect is created by using alliterative phrases?
- Discuss font size and how it is varied to emphasise specific words/phrases.

Development

- In paired and independent reading, read more stories from the anthology.
- Develop small group improvisations based on the morals from these stories but with contemporary

5. Teaching Ideas

settings. Give further suggestions, e.g.; '*one good turn deserves another*'; '*honesty is the best policy*'; '*look before you leap*'; '*little friends may prove great friends*'.

- Ask pupils to write a few sentences about which of the fables was their favourite and why? Share favourites with the whole class.
- Pupils could write a diary entry for the fox based on one of these fables, e.g. in *A Dinner Invitation*, the fox could write two diary entries – one expressing his feelings after his dinner party and one expressing contrasting feelings after the stork's dinner party.
- Pupils could write their own fables about a fox. Writing fables is a good task both for stretching more able pupils and for encouraging less able pupils. A fable does not have to be long, which is encouraging for less able pupils.
- Ask pupils to choose an introductory sentence and a concluding moral for their fable in the style of the fables in *Unwitting Wisdom*.
- Ask pupils to illustrate their fables (there are further suggestions in Art activities).

Conclusion

- Produce a class book or library display.
- Pupils might produce their own biographies using the traditional storytelling voice that Helen has used

5. b. Art ideas based on *Unwitting Wisdom* and *The Cockerel and the Fox*

■ Illustrating fables (3/5 lessons)

Objectives:

- To develop an appreciation of contemporary illustration and understand that it is influenced by tradition and a history of art.
- To encourage a closer look at illustration, design and layout.
- To create illustrations to accompany pupil's own fables.

Tradition and the History of Art

Helen Ward's beautiful watercolours of animals and plants fit within the tradition of natural history

5. Teaching Ideas

illustration. Create a display of books and prints showing the world of naturalist illustrators. For example, research the work of Franz Bauer, William MacGillivray, Joseph Wolf, John Gould, John James Audubon, Hortus Eystettensis, Robert Thornton, Mark Catesby and Maria Merian. Use the internet and other sources to research the lives of these and other illustrators. Ask pupils to consider why natural history illustration was so important in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Creating an Inspiration Wall or Scrapbook

In her studio, Helen Ward has an 'inspiration wall', which is a collection of postcards, photographs and reproductions of favourite paintings. The natural world is well represented along with medieval and early renaissance interiors, decorated manuscripts, Indian court paintings and samples of her own work. Some of the artists whose work is included in Helen's collection are Henri Rousseau, Ucello, Piero di Cosimo, Fra Angelica, Holbein and William Morris.

- Pupils can make collections of these artists' work and display them alongside Helen's books.
- Encourage pupils to keep their own inspiration scrapbooks.



5. Teaching Ideas

Appreciation

Invite pupils to give a personal response to the illustrations in *Unwitting Wisdom*. Ask them to select favourite illustrations and talk about why they like them.

Encourage looking closely

- Helen says: "I like illustrations with a lot of air around them". Explore how white space is used in the images of the falling tortoise and the cricket on his blade of grass.
- Notice that the mice are crying in the illustration on the title page of *The Trappings of Power*. Helen says this is because she was painting the illustration when she heard the news about the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center. She says that she often includes subtle reference points so that she will remember when she painted them.
- Consider how colour, shape, line, arrangement, scale and point of view are used to convey meaning. For example,
 - *Sour Grapes*: from what standpoint are we viewing this picture? Why might this point of view have been selected? Compare this to the point of view in *Size isn't Everything*.
 - Compare the use of colour on the title pages for *All Dressed Up* and *Pot Luck*. How do the colours used emphasise the meaning of the story?
 - *A Time to Dance*: consider the arrangement of the stem of wheat and the way this is mirrored in the curve of the cricket's antennae. Notice the arrangement of the swallows and the tortoise in *Not Flying, but Falling*.
 - Consider the scale of the lion and the mouse in *Size isn't Everything*. Notice how the lion fills the page and no white space is left.
 - Encourage the children to observe techniques used, e.g. the fine lines used to suggest feathers on the breast of the Canada Goose (*Fools Gold*), and the sheep's fleece (*Pot Luck*) and the lion's mane (*Size Isn't Everything*).

5. Teaching Ideas

Experimenting with media and materials

Helen's pictures are painted in watercolours; line is picked out using very fine brushes or a fine black pen.

Helen says that "Watercolours have a nature of their own". Different colours respond in different ways when water is added.

- Provide materials for children and show them how to apply watercolour. Encourage them to experiment by blending colours and varying the quantities of paint and water used for less saturated colour.
- Allow the paint to dry and describe the effect that it creates once dry.

Drawing animals – movement

These teaching suggestions relate to the QCA unit of work, which focuses on human movement. These ideas relate to the observation of animal movement and could extend a unit of work on human movement. Helen closely observes how animals move by examining their skeletal structure. Most mammals, she says, are jointed in the same way as humans, though the length of bones varies from creature to creature.

Look again at the picture of the fox on the title page of *Sour Grapes*. What is suggested by the fox's body language? Notice the flattening of the ears against the head, the low level of the tail and the position of the head. Now look at the fox on the title page of *A Dinner Invitation*. What is suggested by the body language in this illustration? Study the different images of the fox in *The Cockerel and the Fox*, paying particular attention to the body language (e.g. the fox lurking among the cabbages, sitting watching the cockerel on the fence, opening his mouth to speak, slinking away at the end of the story etc.).

Use video and photographic sources as a starting point for showing children how they can draw in two dimensions.

Design – layout

Helen works closely with her designer. Consider the different fonts used. What effect is created by using these fonts?

5. Teaching Ideas

Notice how the text is laid out on the page with white margins and a faint floral border.

Find examples of places where the text has been laid out to emphasize meaning, e.g. "Gravity of the Wind" being pulled towards the bottom of the page (in *Not Flying, But Falling*). Increasing size TWENTY, THIRTY, FIFTY (in *Fool's Gold*).

Notice how illustrations are interspersed with text to enhance but not swamp the story.

Create illustrations for your own fable

Ask pupils to research and draw the animal characters for their own fables and to lay out their stories as in *Unwitting Wisdom* with a title page and decorated story page. Use large white sheets of paper to encourage greater freedom.

5. c. Drama ideas based on *The Cockerel and the Fox* (4/5 lessons)

Objectives

- To introduce/consolidate the features of play scripts.
- To write a scene for *The Cockerel and the Fox*.
- To build pupils' confidence in performing.
- To encourage reflection and friendly criticism of each other's work.

Introduction

- Explain to the class that this fable is not by Aesop, although he did tell similar tales. Rather, this one appears in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (*The Nun's Priest's Tale*, *Chanticleer and the Fox*) and appeared before that in French in the 12th century. Read the background information presented at the back of the book before or after reading the story.
- Ward makes reference to the characteristics of the fox and these could be compared with the characteristics that the pupils drew up previously. Pupils can further investigate the role of the fox

5. Teaching Ideas

in English and French folklore, and in modern literature. Produce a display of sources (e.g. *Reynard the Fox*; Ben Jonson's *Volpone*; Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen*; Roald Dahl's *Fantastic Mr Fox*; *The Belstone Fox*; Chris Wormell's *Henry and the Fox*; Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Mr Tod*; Colin Dann's *The Animals of Farthing Wood*; Disney's *Robin Hood*; Joel Chandler Harris' *Tales of Uncle Remus*; Brian Jacques' *Redwall*; *The Bellmaker*). Pictures of foxes in art and photographs can add visual interest and can be used as reference for pupils' art work

- Read the book to the class and discuss whether it has the feature of a fable (refer to class list that was drawn up in the first lesson). Does it remind them of any of the other fables that they have read?
- **Discussion:**
 - What does the expression, 'pride comes before a fall,' mean?
 - How does the fox play to Chanticleer's vanity?
 - Note the similarities with *Hard Cheese*. A table showing the similarities and differences could be constructed. Discuss why stories originating in different parts of the world often have the same basic story (e.g. the 'Cinderella' story)
 - Why do the farmyard animals not want to venture beyond the boundaries of the farm?
 - How does Chanticleer give the fox a taste of his own medicine?
 - What lesson do both of these animals learn?
- **Language:**
 - Ask pupils to find examples of alliteration and comment on how this affects the story (e.g. 'bumbling bees').
 - When the fox flatters Chanticleer, he speaks in rhyme, 'I don't mean to be alarming, but I heard that voice of yours and it really is quite charming'. What effect does this create?
 - Discuss the onomatopoeic words in the text, particularly those used to describe how the animals sound (e.g. 'squawked', 'quacked', 'honking').
 - Investigate the verbs used to describe the way animals move. Encourage pupils to use some of these words in their own writing, where appropriate.

5. Teaching Ideas

Development

Playscripts

- Use a storyboard to identify a number of key scenes from the story (6 – 8). Develop small group improvisations around each scene and use this as a basis for scriptwriting.
- Discuss the features of a play script and how it differs from the prose of *The Cockerel and the Fox*. Depending on pupils' familiarity with play scripts, it might be useful to show them an example and compare it to a prose extract to highlight the differences. List the features of a play script and display as a prompt to support pupils' writing.
- The book could be divided into sections so each group can take a section to work on. Vary the length of the sections to allow for different abilities within the class. Pupils should be made aware of the audience they are writing for – perhaps it is simply for each other or to perform to younger pupils or to parents. Discuss how this might affect their script writing.
- Assemble a script using the scenes that each group has worked on. Edit to ensure seamless transitions from one scene to the next.
- Rehearse and dramatise the script Pupils could be encouraged to think about the characteristics of each animal and how they might portray them using body language and different voices to make their characters believable. Adding sound effects might also be an important element for the groups to think about – this could be done in a music lesson.
- In Art, pupils could make masks to reflect whichever animal that they are representing in the play.
- Video the performance. View and evaluate.

Conclusion

- Develop skills in peer evaluation. Ask each group to comment on other groups' clarity, expression, actions etc.

6. Taking it Further

■ Cross-Curricular Links

- **R.E.** – Parables could be discussed as they are also stories with a message or a moral. The following website is a lovely website for children about the parables:
<http://just4kidsmagazine.com/rainbowcastle/parables.html>
- **Science/Geography** – Helen Ward includes a really interesting section at the back of her book about the rare breeds of animal that she has drawn. This could be explored further with the class, perhaps through looking at variation and classification of animals, how they adapt to suit their environment or how rare breeds can be protected. The following website may be of use as it highlights which breeds are vulnerable/endangered:
<http://www.rbst.org.uk/watch-list/main.php>
Helen Ward uses a range of reference sources for her animal pictures. All of them from the tiniest insect to the elephant are real animals and can be identified from her pictures. Use a range of sources to identify some of these animals.
- **Music** – Pupils could compose a piece of music to accompany one of their fables or a fable that they have read. *The Carnival of the Animals*. Composed by Saint Saëns could be used to show pupils how animals have been represented in music. The book, *The Carnival of the Animals* by Gerard Benson & Satoshi Kitamura, includes poems inspired by Saint Saens' music and a CD.
- **P.S.H.C.E** – All of the fables in *Unwitting Wisdom* could be read as a stimulus for discussion in P.S.H.C.E. *Fools Gold* provides a good starting point for talking about greed and why it is an undesirable characteristic to have. *Steady and Slow* is a good way to open a discussion with pupils about talent, effort and success.

6. Taking it Further

■ General

- **Poetry** – The fables could be compared with poems that have a moral, such as Hilaire Belloc's *Cautionary Verses*. These can be found on the following website:
<http://www.theotherpages.org/poems/belloc01.html>
- **Language** – Explore with pupils the Middle English that Chaucer used and how it compares with Modern English. The following website might be useful as it offers a glossary of Chaucer's language:
<http://geoffreychaucer.org/language/>
- **Comparison** – Different versions of the same fable could be compared. Which version did they like the least/most? Why? What are the similarities and difference between the versions? The websites below contain different versions of the same fable.
- **Spelling** – investigate the spellings of animal names and their plurals. Look for adverbs within the text etc.

■ Useful Internet Links

- <http://www.pubwire.com/DownloadDocs/AFABLES.PDF>
This is a fantastic resource – it is an electronic book containing many of Aesop's fables. It provides background information to Aesop and what fables are. Each fable has accompanying questions to stimulate discussion.
- <http://www.umass.edu/aesop/fable.php?n=0>
This website tells traditional versions of the fables alongside modern versions.
- <http://www.pacificnet.net/~johnr/aesop/>
Contains many fables, some of which can be played aloud.
- http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=237
A lesson plan for fables and trickster stories. This is particularly useful as a cross-cultural resource, as it includes a range of fables from many different cultures and countries.
- http://www.literacymatters.com/resources/Weekly_Plan_Y5T2W1.pdf
A lesson plan for a year 5 class about myths, legends and fables.

The authors

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