

## Chapter 6

## The Fruits of Labour

Aesop was an African slave who lived over 25,000 years ago. He wrote these fables, often making animals talk like people, to evade being punished. These fables have been told down the ages.

This story took place long, long ago. Out in the country there lived a man with his two sons. His wife had been dead many years and he had brought up his children himself. But he was not satisfied with the upbringing of his sons. Since the boys were motherless, he had been very lenient with them and had spoiled them to some extent.

His sons were lazy, good-for-nothings. They enjoyed wearing fine clothes, eating rich food and spending their time lounging around doing nothing.

As the man grew older, he started worrying about his sons. He owned the best orchard for miles around. The oranges, peaches, plums and cherries from his

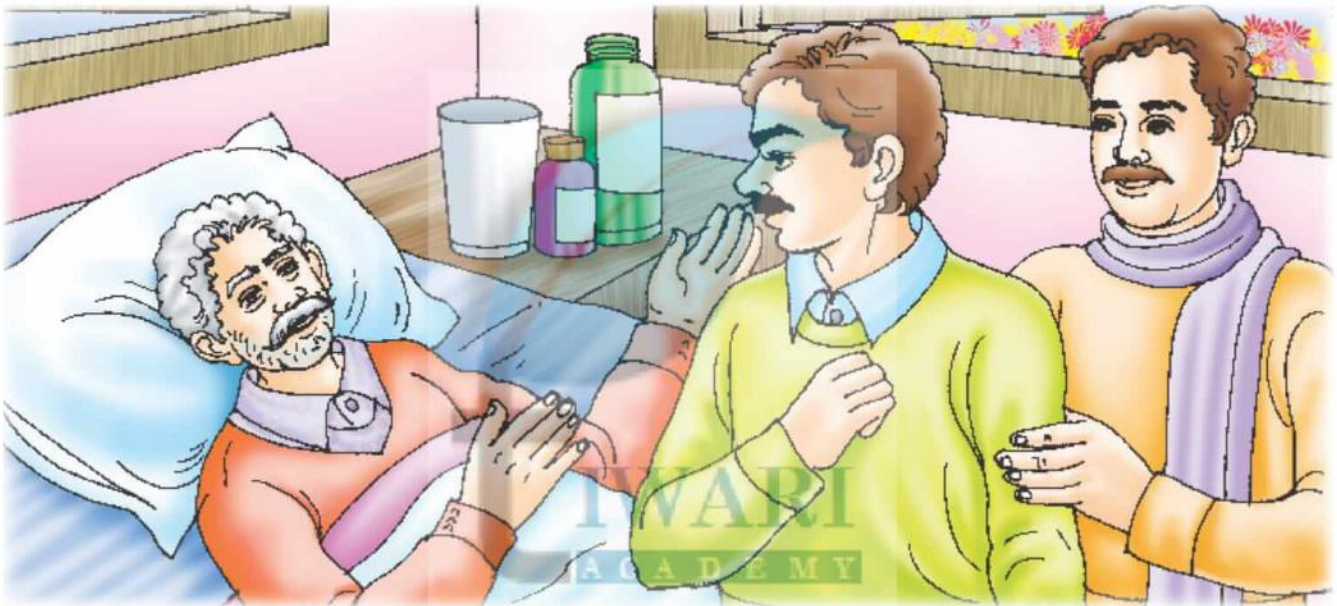


**Teacher's Note:** Encourage the pupils to read more and more of Aesop fables.



orchard were the best that money could buy. They were famed far and wide for their sweetness and juiciness. Day in and day out, the old man tended his orchard. He got no help from his lazy sons. Lovingly he dug, raked, hoed and watered the trees.

One cold and frosty winter's day the old man was nearing his death, still a very worried man. He called for his two sons. When they entered his room, they found their father grazing dreamily out of the window. Following their father's gaze, all the sons saw was the bare orchard,. Most of the trees had shed their leaves. They looked like scarecrows without clothes,. The earth was parched and hard, Altogether, the orchard was a dreary sight.



'Do you see my orchard ?' the old man asked his sons in a quavering voice.

'Yes, Father,' said, one.

'It looks so barren and forlorn,' said the other.

'My sons, it is a wonderful orchard,' whispered the old man. 'It has given us the best of fruits year after years. The golden peaches and oranges, the ruby-red apples and cherries have been my pride over these long years.'

'Yes, the orchard is very fruitful,' said his sons.

The old man looked at the sons. They wore beautiful spotlessly clean clothes. Their hands were soft and pale. These hands had seen neither the warmth of the sun, nor the harshness of the soil.



The dying man murmured, 'My sons, there is a great treasure hidden in my orchard. If you want to find this treasure, you will have to give up your lazy ways.'

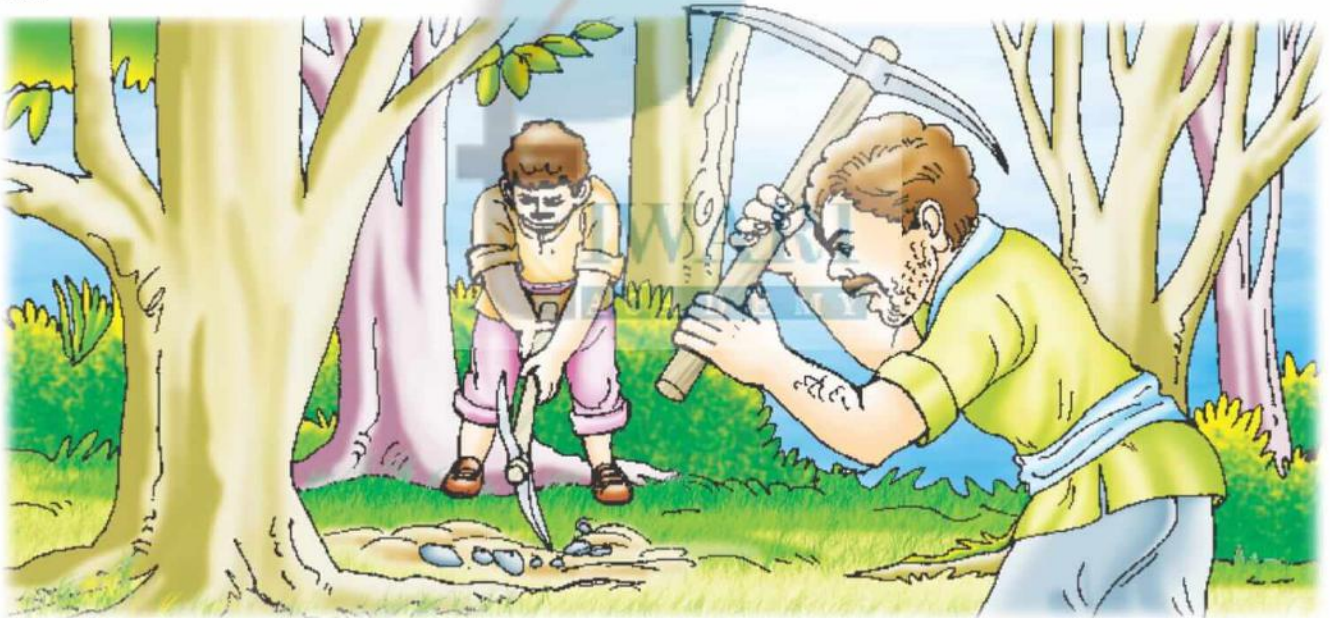
'Yes, Father. We will do anything to discover this hidden treasure.'

'Then listen well,' said the old man. 'You will have to dig deep. Very, very deep. The treasure is scattered amongst the fruit trees. Every little bit of earth in the orchard will have to be turned over. However, do not dig too close to the trees-trunks. Neither should you dig too far from their. Dig properly, my sons.' So saying the old man breathed his last.

The old man's sons dug a grave for their father's body and buried it. It was hard work. They were tired.

'We'll dig for the treasure another day,' they said,

They lazed and they lazed, always putting off the digging for the treasure. But they soon found they had not enough money for the good life they were used to.



So, one fine day they rolled up their sleeves and started the hunt for their father's treasures. They dug and dug. Not being used to manual labour, they found the work very tiring. Their backs hurt, their hands were rough and sore and their silken clothes were all but ruined,. But they continued to dig.

The seasons changed. Winter gave way to spring. The trees sprouted fresh

green leaves. These in turn grew bigger and turned to a darker shade of green. The sons noticed nothing. They carried on their search for the treasure, but found only stones, which they threw out.

After a while, blossoms appeared on the fruit trees,. By and by the tree were all ablaze with pink and white flowers. The apples blossom was snowy white and the cherry blossom a beautiful rose pink.

The two brothers saw none of this. They dug and they dug, searching for the promised treasure. The summer went by and autumn approached. Yet, no treasure did they find.

With the coming of autumn, delicate little fruits began appearing on the trees,. Still the two boys searched in vain. The fruit ripened. The orchard was heavily laden with red and golden fruit.

‘There is no treasure here,’ said one, ‘we have dug up every inch of this orchard.’

‘We might as well give up,’ said the second son. ‘Let's sell the fruit. We should be able to get a little money for it.’

The fruit merchant was called. ‘I have never seen such as excellent quality of fruit,’ he said in amazement. ‘I will give you much more gold than I promised you for this crop.’

The two sons couldn't believe their ears! Handing over the sacks of gold coins to the brothers the merchant said, ‘You must have looked after this orchard very lovingly. These fruits show that you have dug deep and turned over the soil well, You must have removed every weed, every stones. Only then could you have got this wonderful treasure. If you produce fruit like this, I will buy your crop every year.’

The two brothers exchanged looks of understanding. “This is Father's treasure,” they said in unison. “Golden oranges and peaches, ruby-red apples and cherries. And bags of gold in payment!”

## Words to Learn

lenient  
frosty  
forlorn

harshness  
laden

lounging  
vain

blossom  
quavering

sprouted  
unison



## ● Skill Test ●

### WORK OUT

#### A. Answer the following questions :

1. Why had the old man been lenient with his sons ?  
.....
2. Why did he worry about his sons as he grow older ?  
.....
3. What did the orchard look like during winter ?  
.....
4. Why did the old man tell his sons that his treasure was buried in the orchard ?  
.....
5. Did they finally find the treasure ? What was it ?  
.....

#### B. Fill in the blanks :

1. The son dug a ..... for their father's body and ..... it.
2. Winter gave way to .....
3. The apple blossom was ..... and the cherry blossom a .....
4. The summer went by and ..... approached.

### GRAMMAR

#### Look at the words in bold in these sentences. Strike out whichever are wrong :

1. I don't like swimming in cold ~~water~~/~~the cold water~~.
2. ~~Money~~/~~the money~~ always brings happiness.
3. Please pass me ~~salt~~/~~the salt~~.
4. ~~Old man~~/~~the old man~~ owned ~~the best orchard~~/~~best orchard~~ for miles around.
5. We all need ~~friends~~/~~the friends~~.

## VOCABULARY

Match the opposites :

dead

active

lenient

worst

lazy

fruitless

rich

alive

best

strict

fruitful

poor

fresh

stale

## COMPOSITION

Imagine you are this tree. The girl is crying before you as she has got less marks in the test. How will you console her ?

