

# *The Vultures and the Pigeons*

La Fontaine

French

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*Easy*

*1 min read*

Mars once made havoc in the air:  
Some cause aroused a quarrel there  
Among the birds;—not those that sing,  
The courtiers of the merry Spring,  
But naughty hawk and vulture folks,  
Of hooked beak and talons keen.  
The carcass of a dog, 'tis said,  
Had to this civil carnage led.  
Blood rain'd upon the swarded green,  
And valiant deeds were done, I ween.  
Suffice to say, that chiefs were slain,  
And heroes strow'd the sanguine plain.  
'Twas sport to see the battle rage,  
And valiant hawk with hawk engage;  
'Twas pitiful to see them fall,—  
Torn, bleeding, weltering, gasping, all.  
Force, courage, cunning, all were plied;  
Intrepid troops on either side

No effort spared to populate  
The dusky realms of hungry Fate.  
This woful strife awoke compassion  
Within another feather'd nation,  
Of iris neck and tender heart.  
They tried their hand at mediation—  
To reconcile the foes, or part.  
The pigeon people duly chose  
Ambassadors, who work'd so well  
As soon the murderous rage to quell,  
And stanch the source of countless woes.  
A truce took place, and peace ensued.  
Alas! the people dearly paid  
Who such pacification made!  
Those cursed hawks at once pursued  
The harmless pigeons, slew and ate,  
Till towns and fields were desolate.  
The safety of the rest requires  
The bad should flesh each other's spears:  
Whoever peace with them desires  
Had better set them by the ears.

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