

The Wolf Turned Shepherd

La Fontaine

French

Easy
1 min read

A wolf, whose gettings from the flocks
Began to be but few,
Bethought himself to play the fox
In character quite new.
A shepherd's hat and coat he took,
A cudgel for a crook,
Nor e'en the pipe forgot:
And more to seem what he was not,
Himself upon his hat he wrote,
"I'm Willie, shepherd of these sheep."
His person thus complete,
His crook in upraised feet,
The impostor Willie stole upon the keep.
The real Willie, on the grass asleep,
Slept there, indeed, profoundly,
His dog and pipe slept, also soundly;

His drowsy sheep around lay.
As for the greatest number,
Much bless'd the hypocrite their slumber,
And hoped to drive away the flock,
Could he the shepherd's voice but mock.
He thought undoubtedly he could.
He tried: the tone in which he spoke,
Loud echoing from the wood,
The plot and slumber broke;
Sheep, dog, and man awoke.
The wolf, in sorry plight,
In hampering coat bedight,
Could neither run nor fight.
There's always leakage of deceit
Which makes it never safe to cheat.
Whoever is a wolf had better
Keep clear of hypocritic fetter.

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