

## Mercury and the Workmen

A workman who was chopping wood by a river accidentally dropped his ax into a deep pool. Being thus deprived of the means of his livelihood, he sat down on the bank and lamented his misfortune. The god Mercury appeared and demanded to know the cause of his tears. After the workman told his tale, Mercury plunged into the stream. He soon reappeared, carrying a golden ax. "Is this what you lost?" Mercury inquired. When the workman said the ax was not his, Mercury dived beneath the water a second time. This time he returned with a silver ax and again asked the workman if it was his. When the workman said it was not, Mercury dived into the pool for the third time and brought out the workman's lost ax. The workman claimed it and expressed his gratitude for its recovery. Mercury was so pleased with the workman's honesty that he gave him the golden and silver axes in addition to his own.

When the workman returned to his village, he told his friends all that had happened. One of them resolved to get the same good fortune for himself. He ran to the river and threw his ax into the pool. Then he sat down and began to weep. Mercury appeared to him just as he had hoped. "Why are you weeping?" Mercury asked. When the workman explained the cause of his grief, Mercury plunged into the stream and brought out a golden ax. "Is this your ax?" he asked. The workman seized the golden ax greedily and declared that it was the very same ax he had lost. Mercury, displeased by his deceit, not only took away the golden ax but refused to recover for him the ax he had thrown into the pool.



### MONDAY

Use the words from the passage to fill in the blanks.

deceit      deprived      gratitude      lamented      livelihood      misfortune

1. A dishonest man uses \_\_\_\_\_, tricks, and lies to get what he wants.
2. The colonists farmed and fished for their \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Should criminals be \_\_\_\_\_ of their right to vote?
4. Granny \_\_\_\_\_ the loss of her youth.
5. The snowstorm was a great \_\_\_\_\_ for the mountain climbers.
6. We wrote thank-you notes to show our \_\_\_\_\_ for the gifts.

## TUESDAY

What is the moral of the story? Provide details from the passage to support your answer.

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## WEDNESDAY

Choose the correct answer.

1. What genre of fiction is this story?  

<input type="radio"/> A historical fiction	<input type="radio"/> C fable
<input type="radio"/> B science fiction	<input type="radio"/> D realistic fiction
2. What is the setting of this story?  

<input type="radio"/> A a forest with a river	<input type="radio"/> C a farm
<input type="radio"/> B a Roman city	<input type="radio"/> D a used car lot
3. What does the first workman receive for his honesty?  

<input type="radio"/> A a bag of gold and silver	<input type="radio"/> C a silver ax in addition to his own ax
<input type="radio"/> B a golden ax in addition to his own ax	<input type="radio"/> D a silver ax and a golden ax in addition to his own ax

## THURSDAY

Put the events in order. Write 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 next to each one.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Mercury gives the workman a golden ax, a silver ax, and the ax he lost.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A workman accidentally drops his ax in a river.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The second workman throws his ax and then lies and says the golden ax is his.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mercury brings the workman a golden ax, but the workman says it is not his.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mercury takes away the golden ax and refuses to recover the lost ax.

## FRIDAY

Do you think Mercury's treatment of the second workman was appropriate? Explain.

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