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Fables de La Fontaine, Tome I

Author

La Fontaine, Jean de
La Varende, Jean de

Date

1956. Marcus. Paris

Category

La Fontaine.

Language note: French.

Call No: PZ8.2.L135 Fab 1956 (Fable Collection, Reinert-Alumni Memorial Library) .

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Remark:

This book has been a challenge to me! It is a cheaper copy of the Édition Enfantine of the Édition de Luxe by Marcus in 1949. It lacks that book's colophon entries on the verso of the title-page and on the very last page. It also lacks its dust jacket. The cover is differently done, illustrating FG, while the back cover replaces the seal of Beuchet and Vanden Brugge with the colored image of Mother Goose departing from her little friends with her book under her wing. (This illustration is still, as in the fancier edition, on 52.) Perhaps one-third of the fancier book's colored illustrations are here rendered in black-and-white, like the second of GA's three images. In that fancier version, everything is colored. The order of some images is also rearranged, as happens with the latter two images of GA. Some images are simply dropped, and the order of fables is changed. Thus FC appears there with the illustration on the right on 12-13. Here the illustration is on the left, and FC appears on 22-23. This book, then, contains fifteen fables. Among the prize-winning illustrations, I would say, are WL and FS. Also remarkable is the hen on 32 who is being simultaneously choked, plucked, and

guttled! There is frequently a small chorus of ladybugs watching a fable's central scene. The surprises in this book continue to multiply; if one looks under the gift-seal of the Mayor of Montreal, one finds that the book was inscribed by her in 1957. It is clear to me now that there are two primary divisions of the fable-work of Lorigoux: early (done in and around 1921) and late (published during the years 1949-60). In the work of the latter period, Marcus published books in three formats. The largest format includes the Édition de Luxe and this copy. Since these copies seem to be extensive and almost comprehensive, I am puzzled by the Tome I on the cover and spine here; it does not appear on the title-page. There is also no reference to a first or second volume in the Édition Enfantine.) A middle format seems to involve three books that each include some fables from the larger-format editions. I have Volumes I and III of this middle set. Volume I reproduces six fables from the larger-format editions and does some of the illustrations in black-and-white. Some illustrations are simply dropped from the larger editions; MM for example has only two illustrations here instead of the three there. The black-and-white illustrations in this middle-format edition are not necessarily the illustrations done in black-and-white in the cheaper large-format edition. For example, MM there has its first illustration in color, but it is in black-and-white here. Volume III of the middle format reproduces two fables from these larger versions but adds four others. The third format, dated 1960, is smallest in size. The title-page illustration of Mother Goose reading to the animals is done in blue-and-black, as are the endpapers. This volume presents ten fables, many of them in a two-page spread including a full-page colored illustration. Exceptions include MM, done on one page with one black-and-white small design, and DW, TH, and The Heron, which take three pages each. The images in the later Lorigoux, by contrast with his 1921 Hachette edition, show a new sense of texture, derived perhaps from someone like Dufy, and a great sense of play in the little creatures around the central figures.

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