

The Astrologer

by Aesop *from The Aesop for Children*

A man who lived a long time ago believed that he could read the future in the stars. He called himself an Astrologer, and spent his time at night gazing at the sky.

One evening he was walking along the open road outside the village. His eyes were fixed on the stars. He thought he saw there that the end of the world was at hand, when all at once, down he went into a hole full of mud and water.

There he stood up to his ears, in the muddy water, and madly clawing at the slippery sides of the hole in his effort to climb out.

His cries for help soon brought the villagers running. As they pulled him out of the mud, one of them said:

"You pretend to read the future in the stars, and yet you fail to see what is at your feet! This may teach you to pay more attention to what is right in front of you, and let the future take care of itself."

"What use is it," said another, "to read the stars, when you can't see what's right here on the earth?"

Take care of the little things and the big things will take care of themselves.

Questions

1. What was a "little thing" that the the Astrologer should have taken care of?
2. One villager said, "This may teach you to pay more attention to what is right in front of you." What was right in front of the Astrologer?
3. When was the Astrologer walking along the road? Why do you think it was that time of day?
4. What does "fixed" mean in this sentence: "His eyes were fixed on the stars."?

Vocabulary List

Each of the vocabulary words below are used in the reading passage. As you read the passage, pay attention to context clues that suggest the word's meaning.

1. astrologer
2. gazing
3. fixed
4. madly
5. fail

Context Clues

Using context clues from the sentences in the passage, underline the correct meaning of the word in boldface.

1. "He called himself an **Astrologer**, and spent his time at night gazing at the sky"
a. fortune teller who studies stars b. adventurer; pioneer c. navigator or guide d. scientist
2. "He called himself an Astrologer, and spent his time at night **gazing** at the sky"
a. drawing pictures b. camping or living c. studying or staring d. chasing; following
3. "His eyes were **fixed** on the stars"
a. repaired; made better b. blinded c. glancing; looking quickly d. locked; fastened
4. "There he stood up to his ears, in the muddy water, and **madly** clawing at the slippery sides"
a. wildly or crazily b. sloppily; covered in mud c. carefully or with purpose d. happily
5. "You pretend to read the future in the stars, and yet you **fail** to see what is at your feet"
a. flunk; bad grade b. want or hope c. forget; neglect d. rush or hurry