

# The Lion and the Rat

## Fables of la Fontaine > Book II > The Lion and the Rat

To show to all your kindness, it behoves :  
There's none so small but you his aid may need.  
I quote two fables for this weighty creed,  
Which either of them fully proves.  
From underneath the sword  
A rat, quite off his guard,  
Popped out between a lion's paws.  
The beast of royal bearing  
Showed what a lion was  
The creature's life by sparing  
A kindness well repaid;  
For, little as you would have thought  
His majesty would ever need his aid,  
It proved full soon  
A precious boon.  
Forth issuing from his forest glen,  
To explore the haunts of men,  
In lion net his majesty was caught,  
From which his strength and rage  
Served not to disengage.  
The rat ran up, with grateful glee,  
Gnawed off a rope, and set him free.  
By time and toil we sever  
What strength and rage could never.