

1812

GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES

THE DOG AND THE SPARROW

Jacob Ludwig Grimm and Wilhelm Carl Grimm

Grimm, Jacob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm (1786-1859) - German philologists whose collection "Kinder- und Hausmarchen," known in English as "Grimm's Fairy Tales," is a timeless literary masterpiece. The brothers transcribed these tales directly from folk and fairy stories told to them by common villagers. The Dog and the Sparrow (1812) - A sparrow helps get food for a hungry dog who is then killed by a wagoner. The sparrow exacts revenge on the wagoner for killing his friend.

THE DOG AND THE SPARROW

THERE WAS once a sheep-dog whose master behaved ill to him and did not give him enough to eat, and when for hunger he could bear it no longer, he left his service very sadly. In the street he was met by a sparrow, who said, "Dog, my brother, why are you so sad?" And the dog answered, "I am hungry and have nothing to eat." Then said the sparrow, "Dear brother, come with me into the town; I will give you plenty." Then they went together into the town, and soon they came to a butcher's stall and the sparrow said to the dog, "Stay here while I reach you down a piece of meat," and he perched on the stall, looked round to see that no one noticed him, and packed, pulled, and dragged so long at a piece that lay near the edge of the board that at last it slid to the ground. The dog picked it up, ran with it into a corner, and ate it up. Then said the sparrow, "Now come with me to another stall, and I will get you another piece, so that your hunger may be satisfied." When the dog had devoured a second piece the sparrow asked, "Dog, my brother, are you satisfied now?" "Yes, as to meat, I am," answered he, "but I have had no bread." Then said the sparrow, "That also shall you have; come with me." And he led him to a baker's stall and pecked at a few little rolls until they fell to the ground, and as the dog still wanted more, they went to another stall farther on and got more bread.

When that was done the sparrow said, "Dog, my brother, are you satisfied yet?" "Yes," answered he, "and now we will walk a little

outside the town." And they went together along the high road. It was warm weather, and when they had gone a little way the dog said, "I am tired, and would like to go to sleep." "Well, do so," said the sparrow; "in the meanwhile I will sit near on a bough." The dog laid himself in the road and fell fast asleep, and as he lay there a wagoner came up with a wagon and three horses, laden with two casks of wine.

The sparrow, seeing that he was not going to turn aside but kept in the beaten track, just where the dog lay, cried out, "Wagoner, take care, or you shall suffer for it!" But the wagoner, muttering, "What harm can you do to me?" cracked his whip and drove his wagon over the dog, and he was crushed to death by the wheels. Then the sparrow cried, "You have killed the dog my brother, and it shall cost you horses and cart!" "Oh! horses and cart!" said the wagoner, "what harm can you do me, I should like to know?" and drove on.

The sparrow crept under the covering of the wagon and pecked at the bung-hole of one of the casks until the cork came out, and all the wine ran out without the wagoner noticing. After a while, looking round, he saw that something ripped from the wagon, and on examining the casks he found that one of them was empty, and he cried out, "I am a ruined man!" "Not ruined enough yet!" said the sparrow, and flying to one of the horses he perched on his head and pecked at his eyes. When the wagoner saw that he took out his axe to hit the sparrow, who at that moment flew aloft, and the wagoner, missing him, struck the horse on the head, so that he fell down dead. "Oh, I am a ruined man!" cried he.

"Not ruined enough yet!" said the sparrow, and as the wagoner drove on with the two horses that were left, the sparrow crept again under the wagon-covering and pecked the cork out of the second cask, so that all the wine leaked out. When the wagoner became aware of it, he cried out again, "Oh! I am a ruined man!" But the sparrow answered, "Not ruined enough yet!" and perched on the second horse's head and began pecking at his eyes. Back ran the wagoner and raised his axe to strike, but the sparrow flying aloft, the stroke fell on the horse, so that he was killed. "Oh! I am a ruined man!" cried the wagoner.

"Not ruined enough yet!" said the sparrow, and perching on the third horse began pecking at his eyes. The wagoner struck out in his anger at the sparrow without taking aim, and missing him, he laid his third horse dead. "Oh! I am a ruined man!" he cried.

"Not ruined enough yet!" answered the sparrow, flying off; "I will see to that at home."

So the wagoner had to leave his wagon standing, and went home full of rage.

“Oh!” said he to his wife, “what ill-luck I have had! The wine is spilt, and the horses are all three dead.” “Oh husband!” answered she, “such a terrible bird has come to this house; he has brought with him all the birds of the air, and there they are in the midst of our wheat, devouring it.” And he looked and there were thousands upon thousands of birds sitting on the ground, having eaten up all the wheat, and the sparrow in the midst, and the wagoner cried, “Oh! I am a ruined man!” “Not ruined enough yet!” answered the sparrow. “Wagoner, it shall cost you your life!” and he flew away.

Now the wagoner, having lost everything he possessed, went indoors and sat down, angry and miserable, behind the stove. The sparrow was perched outside on the window-sill and cried, “Wagoner, it shall cost you your life!” Then the wagoner seized his axe and threw it at the sparrow, but it broke the window sash in two and did not touch the sparrow, who now hopped inside, perched on the stove, and cried, “Wagoner, it shall cost you your life!” and he, mad and blind with rage, beat in the stove, and as the sparrow flew from one spot to another, hacked everything in pieces- furniture, looking-glasses, benches, table, and the very walls of his house- and yet did not touch the sparrow.

At last he caught and held him in his hand.

“Now,” said his wife, “shall I not kill him?” “No!” cried he, “that were too easy a death; I will swallow him,” and as the bird was fluttering in the man’s mouth, it stretched out its head, saying, “Wagoner, it shall cost you your life!” Then the wagoner reached the axe to his wife saying, “Wife, strike me this bird dead.” The wife struck, but missed her aim, and the blow fell on the wagoner’s head, and he dropped down dead.

But the sparrow flew over the hills and away.

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