

1812

GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES

BROTHER FROLICK

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. Brother Frolick (1812) - A discharged soldier with a small loaf of bread and four kreutzers in gold goes out on a journey and shares his belongings with a saint disguised as a beggar. The saint repays the hermit's kindness.

BROTHER FROLICK

FOR A LONG TIME the King of a certain country had been at war. At last it came to an end, and many soldiers were discharged. One of them was a fellow called Brother Frolick because he was such a lighthearted, jolly fellow; and although he only received a small loaf and four kreutzers in gold, he started on a journey through the world with a merry heart.

He had not gone far, when he saw a poor beggar sitting by the roadside begging, but he did not know that it was a saint in disguise. The beggar asked for alms, and Brother Frolick said, "What shall I give you? I am only a poor, discharged soldier, and all they have given me is a loaf of bread and four kreutzers, and when it is all gone, I must beg as well as you. However, I will give you something." Then he divided the loaf into four pieces, and gave one to the beggar, as well as one of his gold pieces.

The beggar thanked him, and went away, but only to a little distance. Again changing his appearance and face, he seated himself by the highway, waited for Brother Frolick to pass, and again begged for alms. The good-natured soldier gave this beggar also a fourth of his bread and a gold piece.

The saint thanked him, and, after walking some distance, a third time seated himself in another form to beg of Brother Frolick. This

time, also, he gave him a third piece of the divided loaf and another kreutzer. The beggar thanked him and went away.

The kindhearted fellow had now only a fourth part of the loaf and one gold piece left, so he went to an inn, ate the bread, and paid his kreutzer for a jug of beer. As soon as he had finished, he went out, and traveled on for some distance, and there again was the saint in the form of a discharged soldier like himself.

“Good evening, comrade,” he said; “could you give me a piece of bread, and a kreutzer to buy something to drink?” “Where am I to get it?” answered Brother Frolick. “I had my discharge today, and they gave me a loaf of bread and four gold kreutzers. But I met three beggars on the high road, and I gave them each a fourth part of my bread and a kreutzer, and the last kreutzer I have just paid for something to drink with my last piece of bread. Now I am empty, and if you also have nothing, we can go and beg together.” “No,” answered the saint, “we need not do that; I understand a little of medicine and surgery, and can soon earn as much as I shall want.” “Well,” replied Brother Frolick, “I don’t understand doctoring at all, so I must go and beg alone.” “No; come with me,” cried the other; “whatever I earn, you shall have half.” “That is good news for me,” said Brother Frolick, so they went away together.

After a time, as they passed a peasant’s house, they heard great cries and lamentations, so they went in, and found the husband very ill and at the point of death, and the wife weeping and howling with all her might. “Leave off that noise,” said the saint; “I will soon cure your husband.” Then he took some salve out of his pocket, and healed the man so quickly that he could stand up and was quite well.

The husband and wife joyfully thanked the stranger, and said, “What can we give you in return for this kindness?” But the saint would name nothing, and, worse still, refused all they brought to him; and although Brother Frolick nudged him more than once, he still said, “No; I will take nothing- we do not want it.” At last the grateful people brought a lamb, and said that he must take it whether he would or not. Then Brother Frolick nudged him in the side, and said, “Take it, stupid; you know we do want it.” Then the saint said at last, “Well, I will take the lamb, but I cannot carry it; you must do that, if you want it so much.” “Oh, that will be no trouble to me,” cried the other, and taking it on his shoulder they went away together.

After a while, they came to a wood, and Brother Frolick, who began to feel tired and hungry, for the lamb was heavy, proposed that they should stop and rest.

“See,” he said, “this is a beautiful place for us to cook the lamb and eat it.” “It’s all the same to me,” replied the saint, “but I can have nothing to do with the cooking; you must do that if you have a kettle, and I will go away for a little while till it is ready. You must not, however, eat any till I come back; I will be here quite in time.” “Go along,” said Brother Frolick, “I understand how to cook, and I will soon have dinner ready.”

Then the saint went away, and Brother Frolick slaughtered the lamb, lighted a fire, and threw some of the flesh into the kettle to boil. The meat was quite ready, however, before the saint returned, and Brother Frolick became so impatient, that he took out of the kettle a part of the flesh, in which was the heart. “The heart is the best of all,” he said, tasting it, and finding it very good he ate it all.

At last his comrade returned and said: “You may eat all the lamb yourself, I only want the heart, so just give it me.” Then Brother Frolick took a knife and fork and began searching among the pieces of meat for the heart, which, of course, he could not find. Then he said pertly, “It is not there.” “Then where can it be?” said the saint.

“I do not know,” said Brother Frolick; “but see,” he added, “why, what a couple of fools we are, searching for a lamb’s heart; of course there is not one to be found, for a lamb has no heart.” “Ah,” said the other, “that is news. Every animal has a heart, why should not a lamb?” “No, certainly, brother,” he said, “a lamb has no heart; reflect a little, and you will be convinced that it really has none.” “Well, certainly, it is quite clear that there is no heart to be found in this one, and as I do not want any other part, you may eat it all yourself.”

“I cannot eat it all,” replied Brother Frolick, “so what is left I will put into my knapsack.” When this was done, the two started to continue their journey, and Brother Peter, as the saint called himself, caused a large quantity of water to rise on the road just across where they had to pass. Said Brother Peter, “You go first.” “No,” answered the other, “I would rather see you across,” for he thought, “if the water is very deep, I won’t go at all.” So Brother Peter stepped over, and the water only came up to his knees. His comrade prepared to follow, but he had not gone far when the water came up to his neck. “Brother, help me,” he cried. “Will you confess, then, that you ate the lamb’s heart?” he replied. “No,” he

said, "I did not eat it." Immediately the water became deeper, and flowed to his mouth. "Help! help me, brother," he cried. "Will you confess now that you have eaten the lamb's heart?" cried Brother Peter. "No," he replied, "I did not eat it." Now the saint did not intend to drown him, so he allowed the water to subside, and Brother Frolick crossed over safely. They traveled after this till they reached a foreign land, and in the chief city heard that the King's daughter was very ill, and not expected to live.

"Holloa! brother," said the soldier, "that is a good chance for us; if you cure her, we shall never know want again."

But Brother Peter did not hurry himself, and when his comrade begged him to put his best foot foremost, he went slower than ever. Brother Frolick pushed him and dragged him on, but all to no purpose, and at last they heard that the King's daughter was dead. "There now," cried Brother Frolick, "we have lost our chance, all through your sleepy walking." "Be quiet, now," said Brother Peter; "I can not only cure the sick, but I can restore the dead to life." "If that is the case," replied his comrade, "you may be sure that the King will be ready to give us the half of his kingdom for joy." They therefore went to the King's castle, and found them all in great grief.

But Brother Peter said to the King, "Do not mourn, I can restore the Princess to life." He and his comrade were at once led to her room, and telling everyone to go out, they were left alone with the dead Princess. Brother Peter immediately stripped the body of the grave-clothes, and laid it in a bath of very hot water, which he had ordered to be brought. Then he uttered a few strange words, which his comrade tried to remember, and turning to the Princess, said, "I command thee to come out of the bath, and stand on thy feet." Immediately the Princess rose, and was again alive and well. The chamberwomen were sent for, and the Princess in her royal clothes was taken to her father, who received her with great joy, and said to the two strangers, "Name your reward; it shall be yours, even to the half of my kingdom." But Brother Peter replied, "No, I will take no reward for what I have done." "Oh, you foolish fellow,"

thought Brother Frolick to himself. Then he nudged him again in the side: "How can you be so stupid? If you don't want anything, I do." Brother Peter, however, still refused, but the King, seeing that his comrade was quite willing to accept something, told his treasurer to fill the soldier's knapsack with gold.

They left the city after this, and traveled on till they came to a wood. Then said Brother Peter, "We may as well divide that gold." "With all my heart," replied the good-natured fellow.

Peter took the gold, and divided it into three portions. "What is that for?" asked Brother Frolick. "What have you got in your head now? There are only two of us." "Oh," he replied, "it is all right. One third is for myself, one third for you, and one third for him who ate the lamb's heart." "Oh, I ate that," cried Brother Frolick, gathering the money up quickly. "I did indeed; can't you believe me?" "How can it be true?" replied Peter; "a lamb has no heart." "Nonsense, brother," he said, "what are you thinking of? A lamb has a heart as well as other animals. Why should he not have one?" "Now really this is too good," replied Brother Peter. "However, you may keep all the gold to yourself, but I will go on my way alone in future." "As you please, brother," answered the soldier. "Farewell." Then Peter started on another

road, and left Brother Frolick to go off by himself. "It is just as well," thought he, "but still he is a most wonderful man." The soldier had now quite as much money as he wanted, but he knew not how to spend it properly. He wasted it or gave it away, till as time went on he was again almost penniless. At last he arrived at a city where he heard that the King's daughter had just died. "Hello," thought he, "here is an opportunity; I know how to restore her to life, and they will pay me something worth having this time." So he went to the King and told him that he could restore his daughter to life.

Now the King had heard of the discharged soldier who had lately given new life to a Princess, and he thought Brother Frolick was the man. Still, as he was not quite sure, he asked him first for his opinion, and whether he would venture if the Princess was really dead.

The soldier had no fear, so he ordered the bath to be filled with hot water, and went into the room with the dead Princess alone. Then he stripped her of her clothes, placed her in the bath, and said, as he supposed, the words which Brother Peter had said, but the dead body did not move, although he repeated the words three times. He now began to feel alarmed, and cried out in angry tones, "Stand up, will you, or you will get what you don't expect." At this moment the saint appeared in his former shape as a discharged soldier, and entered the room through the window. "You foolish man," he cried, "how can you raise the dead to life? I will help you this time, but don't attempt it again."

Thereupon he pronounced the magic words, and immediately the Princess rose and stood on her feet, and was as well and strong as ever. Then the saint went away through the window, the maids were sent for to dress the Princess in her royal robes, and then the soldier led her to her father. He knew, however, that he was not free to ask for a reward, for Peter had forbidden him to take anything, and therefore when the King asked him what he would have, he said he would take nothing, although he wanted it so much through extravagance and folly. Yet the King ordered his knapsack to be filled with gold, and with many thanks he took his departure.

Outside near the castle gate he met the saint, who said to him, "See now, I forbade you to take anything, and yet you have received a knapsack full of gold." "What could I do," he replied, "when they would put it in for me?" "Then I can only tell you," was the reply, "that if you get into trouble a second time by undertaking what you cannot perform, it will be worse for you." "All right, brother; I don't care, now I have the gold, and I shall not care about putting dead people into a bath again after this." "Ah," said the saint, "your gold will not last long. However, if you do not after this go into unlawful paths, I will give to your knapsack the power of containing in itself whatever you may wish for. And now farewell, you will see me no more."

"Good-bye," said the soldier, as he turned away. "Well," he thought, "I am glad that he is gone; he is a wonderful fellow, no doubt, but I am better without him for a companion." To the wonderful power with which he had endowed his knapsack Brother Frolick never gave a thought.

He went on his way with his gold from place to place, and spent and wasted it as he did before, and at last he had nothing left but four kreutzers. With this sum he entered an inn by the roadside, and felt that the money must go, so he spent three kreutzers in wine, and one in bread.

As he sat eating his bread and drinking his wine, the fragrant smell of roast goose reached his nose. Brother Frolick looked round and peeped about, and at last saw that the landlady had two geese roasting in the oven.

Then he suddenly remembered what his old comrade had said, that whatever he wished for he would find in his knapsack. "Aha," he said to himself, "then I must wish for the geese to be there." Then he went out, and before the door he said, "I wish that the two geese roasting in the oven were in my knapsack." When he had

said this he took it off, peeped in, and there they both lay. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "this is all right. I am a mighty fellow after all," and going farther into a meadow, sat down to enjoy his good fare.

Just as he had finished eating one goose, two farmhands came by, and when they saw the remaining goose, they stood still and looked at it with hungry eyes.

"Well," thought Brother Frolick, "one is enough for me." So he beckoned the workers nearer, and said, "Here, take this goose, and drink my health as you eat it." They thanked him and went away quickly to the inn, bought some wine and bread, and then unpacked the goose which had been given them, and began to eat it.

The landlady, when she saw it, went to her husband, and said, "Those two are eating goose, just see if one of ours is gone from the oven." The landlord ran to look, and found the oven empty. "You thieves!" he exclaimed, running out to them, "where did you get roast goose to eat? Tell me instantly, or I will give you a taste of green hazel juice!" "We are not thieves," they cried; "a discharged soldier gave us this goose yonder in the meadow." "You are not going to make me believe that," cried the landlord; "that soldier has been here, and a most respectable fellow he is; I watched him when he left the house and he had nothing with him then. No; you are the thieves, and shall pay for the goose!" But as they could not pay for it, he took a stick and thrashed them out of the house.

Quite ignorant of all this, Brother Frolick went on his way, till he came to a place where stood a beautiful castle, and not far from it, a large but mean-looking inn. The soldier went up to the inn and asked for a night's lodging. But the landlord said, "There is no room here; the house is full of noble guests." "I wonder at

that," said Brother Frolick, "why should they come here instead of going to that beautiful castle yonder?" "Ah, yes," said the landlord, "many have thought as you do; they have gone to spend a night at the castle, but they have never returned alive. None are allowed to remain," said the landlord, "who do not go in on their heads." "I am not likely to walk in on my head," said the soldier; "but now, landlord, let me take something with me to eat and drink, and I'll go." So the landlord brought him a good supper to take with him, and then Brother Frolick set out to go to the castle. On arriving, he first sat down and ate with great relish, and when he began to feel sleepy, laid himself on the ground, for there was no bed, and was soon asleep.

In the night, however, he was wakened by a terrible noise, and when he roused himself he saw nine hideous imps in the room, dancing round a pole, which they held in their hands. "Dance away," he cried, "as long as you will, but don't come near me." The imps, however, disregarded his orders; nearer and nearer they approached as they danced, till one of them trod on his face, with his heavy foot.

"Keep away, you wretches," he cried. But still they came nearer. Then Brother Frolick grew angry. He started up, seized a chair, and struck out right and left. But nine imps against one soldier is rather too much, and if he struck one before him, another behind would pull his hair most unmercifully. "You demons," he cried suddenly, "I'll take care of you; wait a bit- now then, all nine of you into my knapsack." Whisk! and they were all in; quick as lightning he fastened the bag and threw it into a corner.

Then all was quiet, and Brother Frolick laid himself down again and slept till broad daylight, when the arrival of the landlord of the inn and the nobleman to whom the castle belonged, woke him. They were astonished to find him alive and full of spirits, and said to him, "Have you not seen any ghosts during the night, and did they not try to hurt you?" "Well, not very much," answered Brother Frolick. "I have them all nine quite safe in my knapsack there," and he pointed to the corner. "You can dwell in your castle in peace now," he said to the nobleman. "They will never trouble you again." The nobleman thanked the soldier and loaded him with presents; he also begged him to remain in his service, and promised to take care of him for the remainder of his life. But the soldier said, "No; I have a roving disposition; I could never rest in one place. I will go and travel farther." Then Brother Frolick went to a smith's, and laying the knapsack containing the imps on the anvil, asked the smith and his man to strike it with their great hammers, with all their strength. The imps set up a loud screech, and when at last all was quiet, the knapsack was opened. Eight of them were found quite dead, but the ninth, who had laid himself in a fold, was still living. He slipped out when the knapsack was opened and escaped.

Thereupon Brother Frolick traveled a long time about the world, and those who know can tell many a tale about him. But at last he grew old and thought of his end, so he went to a hermit who was known to be a pious man, and said to him, "I am tired of wandering about, and want now to behave in such a manner that I shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven." The hermit replied, "There are two roads: One is broad and pleasant, and leads to Hell;

the other is narrow and rough, and leads to Heaven.” “I should be a fool,” thought Brother Frolick, “if I were to take the narrow, rough road.” So he set out and took the broad and pleasant road, and at length came to a great black door, which was the door of Hell.

Brother Frolick knocked, and the door-keeper peeped out to see who was there. But when he saw Brother Frolick, he was terrified, for he was the very same ninth imp who had been shut up in the knapsack and had escaped from it with a black eye. So he pushed the bolt in again as quickly as he could, ran to the highest demon, and said, “There is a fellow outside with a knapsack, who wants to come in, but as you value your lives don’t allow him to enter, or he will wish the whole of Hell into his knapsack. He once gave me a frightful hammering when I was inside it.” So they called out to Brother Frolick to go away again, for he should not get in there!

“If they won’t have me here,” thought he, “I will see if I can find a place for myself in Heaven, for I must stay somewhere.” So he turned about and went onwards until he came to the door of Heaven, where he knocked.

St. Peter was sitting hard by as door-keeper. Brother Frolick recognized him at once, and thought, “Here I find an old friend, I shall get on better.” But St. Peter said: “I can hardly believe that you want to come into Heaven.” “Let me in, brother; I must get in somewhere; if they would have taken me into Hell, I should not have come here.” “No,” said St. Peter, “you shall not enter.” “Then if you will not let me in, take your knapsack back, for I will have nothing at all from you.” “Give it here, then,” said St. Peter.

Then Brother Frolick gave him the knapsack into Heaven through the bars, and St. Peter took it and hung it up beside his seat. Then said Brother Frolick, “And now I wish myself inside my knapsack,” and in a second he was in it, and in Heaven, and St. Peter was forced to let him stay there.

THE END