



## Town Musicians of Bremen

### Description

Once upon a time, there was a donkey who worked for a miller for a very long time. He had always carried the bags to the mill without protest. But for some time his strength had been failing and his master was beginning to wonder how he was going to get rid of him.

Sensing his end, the donkey decided to run away and set off for Bremen with the firm intention of becoming a musician in that city.

Shortly afterwards, he met a dog, who was panting on the side of the road as if he had run with all his legs.

Well, why are you so out of breath, Dog? » said the donkey.

« Hello Donkey », said the dog, « It's because I'm too old, every day I'm getting weaker, and since I can't keep up with the pack, my master wanted to kill me, so I ran away. But now, how will I earn my bread? »

« Friend! » said the Donkey. I'm going to Bremen to become a musician in the city, so come and join me. I will play the lute, and you will beat the timbale.

The dog agreed and they went on their way together.

A short time later, they met a cat sitting on the side of the road, looking very sad.

« Well, friend cat, what's the matter with you? » asked the donkey.

« Who can be happy to grow old and useless » replied the cat. « My teeth are dull and I'd rather sit by the stove and purr than chase mice. Because of this, my mistress wanted to drown me. I ran away, but what will become of me now? »



« Come with us to Bremen, » said the donkey. If you can serenade, you'll make a good musician in the city.

The cat agreed and joined the band.

Then the fugitives passed a farmhouse where a rooster was crowing at the top of his voice.

« Good morning, rooster! Said the donkey, you're crowing so loudly that my eardrums are almost pierced! »

« Good morning. The farmer asked the cook to put me in the soup tonight, so I'm singing while I still can.

Your beautiful voice can still be used, » said the donkey; « come with us instead. We are going to Bremen to make music. A new career as an artist awaits us there. »

The Rooster agreed, and all four musicians set off together for the city of Bremen. They could not reach the city in one day, however, and in the evening they arrived at a wood, where they decided to spend the night.

The donkey and the dog lay down under a big tree; the cat sat on a branch, and the rooster flew to the top of the tree.

He was about to fall asleep when he saw a light shining in the distance. He shouted to his friends that there must be a house nearby.

Very well, » said l'ne, « let's go and see it, for it will surely be more welcoming than this gloomy wood. And maybe we'll find some food to eat.

But as they approached the light, they saw that it was emanating from a den of thieves.

The donkey, higher up than the others, looked discreetly out the window.

What do you see, companion? » asked the Rooster.

I see a well-stocked table, » answered the donkey, « with delicious food and drink, and thieves sitting in front of it.

« That would suit us perfectly, » said the Rooster.

So the animals held a council and made a plan to chase the robbers away.

The donkey put his front feet on the window sill, the dog climbed on his back, the cat climbed on the dog, and finally the Rooster flew up to perch on the cat's head.

When they were ready, they sang their song: the donkey bellowing, the dog barking, the cat meowing, and the Rooster shouting;

Then they broke and went through the window, with a terrible noise.



The Ass brayed, the Hound barked, the Cat mewed, and the Cock crowed.

At this sound, the thieves thought the devil himself had entered and they fled to the nearby forest.

Then the musicians sat down to eat as if they had not eaten anything for weeks.

Then they went to bed, each one at his own convenience to sleep:

The donkey lay down on the pile of straw, the dog behind the door, the cat by the hot ashes, and the rooster flew to the rafters.

As they were tired from the long drive, they were all soon asleep.

When midnight had passed, the thieves who were watching from afar, seeing that all seemed calm, said to themselves that they could return.

The chief sent an emissary who entered and lit a match near the cat. The cat was surprised and jumped in his face, scratching and spitting.

Not understanding what was happening to him, the thief was terribly frightened and wanted to run

away.

But while trying to go out by the back door, he woke up the Dog, who jumped on him and bit him on the leg.

As he crossed the pile of straw in front of the house, the Dog gave him a good sound kick with his hind legs, while the Rooster, freshly awakened and invigorated, shouted from his perch:

« Cock-a-doodle-doo! Cock-a-doodle-doo! »

Thereupon, the thief ran back to his gang and told them:

« There is a horrible witch in the house, who spat on me and scratched me with her nails. Behind the door stands a man with a knife, who stabbed me; while in the courtyard is a black monster, who struck me with his club; and on the roof sits a judge, who shouts, « Cut off his neck! »

Henceforth the thieves did not come near the house, and the Bremen musicians took up residence there, so well did they feel.

*Illustrations by Arthur Rackham*

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