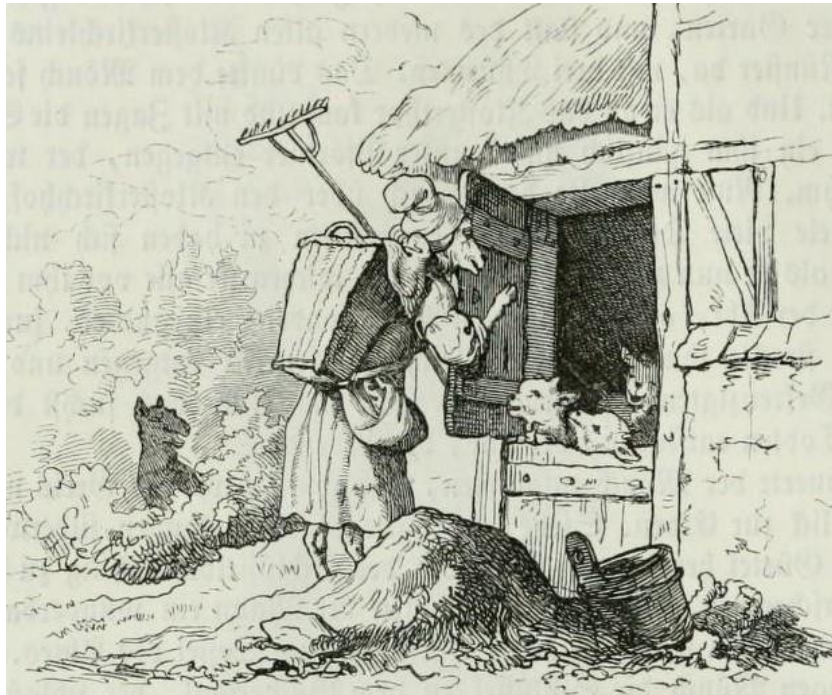


The Folk- and Fairy-Tales of Ludwig Bechstein: **The Seven Little Kids**



Once upon a time there was an old nanny-goat who had seven little kids, and one day when she was going away into the forest, she said: "My dear little kids, beware of the wolf and do not let him in, or you will all be done for." And then she left.

After a while there is a rattling at the front door and a voice calls: "Open up, open up, dear children! Your mummy has come back from the forest!" But the seven little kids knew at once by the roughness of the voice that it was not their mummy, and they cried: "Our mummy doesn't have such a rough voice!" And they did not open up.

After a while there is another rattling at the door and a very soft and gentle voice calls: "Open up, open up, dear children! Your mummy has come back from the forest!"

But the young little kids peeked through the crack of the door and saw a pair of black feet, and they cried: "Our mummy doesn't have such black feet!" And they did not open up.

When the wolf – for it was he – heard this, he swiftly ran to the mill and put his feet in sacks of flour until they were white all over. After that he appeared before the door again, put his feet in the crack, and softly called once more: “Open up, open up, dear children! Your mummy has come back from the forest!”

And when the little kids saw the white feet, and heard the soft voice, then they thought it was their mummy and they quickly opened up. But hardly had they done this when the wolf sprang in. Oh how shocked the poor little kids were, how they wanted to hide themselves! One leapt under the bed, one under the table, one behind the stove, one behind a chair, one behind a large milk pot, and one into the clock-case. But the wolf found them all and gathered them together. Afterwards he left the house, lay down under a tree in the garden, and began to sleep.

When the old goat returned from the forest, she found the house open and the parlour empty, and she at once thought: there’s something uncanny about this. And she began to search for her dear little kids, but she could not find them, no matter where she sought; and no matter how loud she called, there was no reply. Finally she went into the garden, where the wolf was still lying under the tree and sleeping, and snoring so loud that all the branches shook; and when she came closer to him she saw that something was wriggling in his stomach. That filled her with joy and she thought her little kids must still be alive. Now she swiftly ran into the house, fetched a pair of shears, and cut open the wolf’s stomach; then her seven little kids leapt out one after the other, all of them still alive. After that, the old goat quickly fetched seven boulders, put them in the wolf’s stomach,

and sewed it shut again.

When the wolf woke up he was thirsty and went to the well for a drink; but with the first step he took, the boulders in his stomach began to knock against one another, and he said:

“What’s bumping,
What’s thumping
Inside my tum?
It was full of little kids, I swear,
But now I’ve only boulders there!”

And now when the wolf came to the well and bent over to drink, the boulders pulled him in and he drowned. And the old goat and her kids danced for joy around the well.

