

The Folk- and Fairy-Tales of Ludwig Bechstein: **The Three Wedding Guests**

Once upon a time there were three watch-dogs in a village who were good neighbours to one another. A big farmer's wedding was to be held there, to which both young and old were invited, and there was so much cooking and baking, boiling and roasting, that the smell wafted through the entire village. The three dogs were together at that time and, smelling the choice aroma, they deliberated as to how they would go to the wedding and see if there might be anything left over for them. But to avoid a needless fuss they decided to run there not at the same time, all three at once, but separately, one after the other.

The first one went and made his way into the slaughter-house, where he suddenly snatched a large joint of meat; and he was about to be off with it, but he was caught and given a fearful thrashing, after which the joint of meat was torn from his teeth.

And so, hungry and sorely beaten, he returned to the farmyard and his boon companions, who were hungry for good news and asked: "Well, how did you fare, how did you like it?" Now the dog was ashamed to confess the truth that his wedding-meal had consisted of a sharply-salted beet-soup, so he said: "Really well! But they can be a bit heavy-handed there, and one must be able to take the rough with the smooth!"

When they heard this, his companions thought that there was boundless food and drink at the wedding, and many tasty crumbs would be left over, rough and smooth pastries, meat and bone; and the second dog presently ran at full speed to the house where the wedding was taking place, straight into the kitchen, and took what he found – but before he could find the way back he was spotted, and a pan full of boiling hot water

was poured over his back, so that he steamed, as he darted away, just like a poodle coming out of a bath; but if he was terribly burnt, he hid his pain. Now when he came to the farmyard where his two companions were awaiting him, they asked at once: “Well, how did you like it?” – “Really well!”, replied the dog. “But things can get a bit heated there, and they blow hot and cold.”

Then the third dog thought: The wedding-guests are going at the feast hammer and tongs, and hot and cold dishes are being served in turn; so he did not want to not miss anything, and wanted to at least be there for dessert when the shortcrust pastries are served. And he hurried as fast as he could. But no sooner had he entered the house when someone caught him, clamped his tail in the room door, tanned his hide black and blue, and kept him jammed until the skin was scraped off his tail and the disfigured dog scampered away.

“Well, how did you like the wedding?” his friends asked, each one with a touch of scorn in his heart. Their badly beaten companion put his tail between his legs – as far as he could – to hide it from sight, and said: “Really well, things were pretty wild there, and there were rough-puff pastries aplenty, but it was rather hair-raising.”



And for a long time afterwards the three dogs remembered the taste that the wedding soup, the wedding broth, and the wedding cakes had left in their mouths, and they took care not to have their noses put out of joint again.