

The Town Musicians of Bremen

A Fairy Tale by the Brothers Grimm

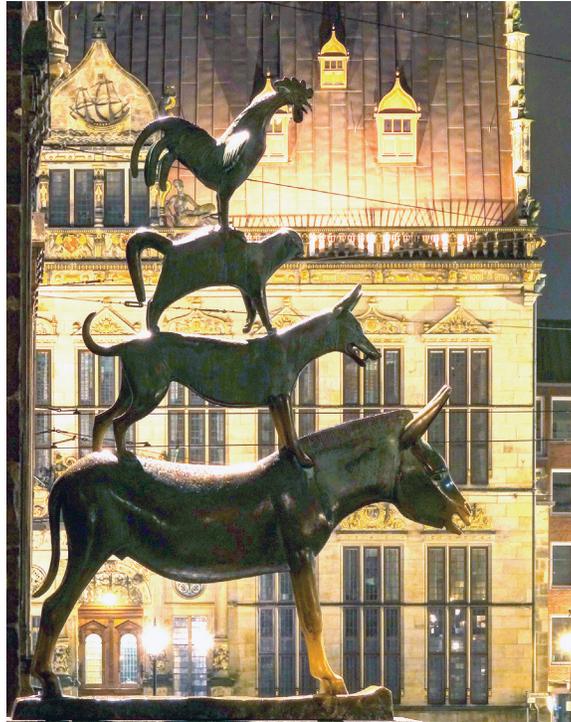


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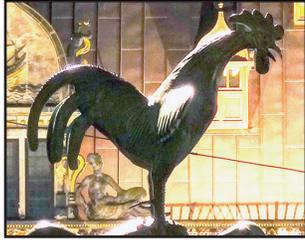
**Statue of the Musicians of Bremen
in Bremen, Germany**

Once upon a time there was an old donkey. He was unable to work as hard as he once could and his owner planned to get rid of him. But Donkey had other ideas—he was going to the city of Bremen to become a town musician.

Donkey set on the long road to Bremen early one morning. After some time, he came upon an old dog lying in the road. Dog left his owner for the same reason as Donkey and had nowhere to go. Donkey invited Dog to join him in becoming a musician in Bremen and Dog gratefully accepted.

Soon, the pair came across an old cat with a similar sad story. Donkey invited Cat to join their band bound for Bremen and Cat joyfully agreed.

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Toward midday, the three animals came across an old rooster who had also outlived his usefulness on the farm. The group was pleased to invite Rooster to join their band bound for Bremen. Rooster was delighted to join them.

Together, the band of musicians journeyed down the long road to Bremen. When at last it got too dark to travel, the animals had to settle in the forest for the night. From his perch high in a tree, Rooster spied the lights from a house in the near distance.

“Let us go to this house,” Rooster suggested to his friends. “Perhaps they have food and a warm place for us to sleep.” Being cold and hungry, the other animals readily agreed.

As the animals approached the house, they heard loud voices coming from inside. When Donkey crept up to a window and peeked inside, he saw a group of robbers enjoying a grand feast at the dining room table. The room around them was filled with stolen treasure. The animals knew they had to work together to scare off the robbers and together they formulated a plan to do just that.

Each of the animals climbed on top of Donkey. Dog stood on Donkey, Cat stood on Dog, and Rooster stood on top of Cat. In the dark, their animal pyramid made them look like a giant and fearsome creature. They walked in front of the great window, and each began to holler his special tune: Donkey brayed, Dog barked, Cat yowled, and Rooster crowed. The animals continued their ear-splitting quartet as they stormed into the house together.

The bellowing monster that crashed into the house terrified the robbers, who dropped everything and fled the house at once leaving their meal and their treasures behind.

Inside the house was warm and dry. The food on the table was still hot. The famished animals finished off the leftovers from the robbers' grand feast. Tired, they blew out the lights, found comfortable spots, and drifted off to sleep.

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Sometime later, the robbers looked back at the house. In the distance, they saw that the light was no longer burning inside and that everything appeared to be quiet. The captain sent one of the robbers to go back and investigate the house.

When the robber got to the house, he opened the door and tiptoed inside. Instantly awake, Cat's eyes glowed like embers in the night. Thinking Cat's eyes were live coals in the oven, the robber tried to light a match with them. Angered at being poked in the eyes, Cat jumped into the robber's face, spitting, hissing, and scratching.

The robber took a few steps backward and stepped on Dog's tail. Dog jumped up and bit him in the leg. The robber tried to run for the door, but bumped into Donkey, who gave him a strong kick. Alarmed by all the noise, Rooster began crowing from his perch near the ceiling. The robber ran off bruised and frightened.

The robber limped back to his camp fast as he could. "There is a witch in the house," he told the captain. "She blew at me and scratched my face with her long fingers. A man with a knife stabbed me in the leg, a giant monster hit me with a wooden club, and then another man began shouting 'Bring the rascal here!' from the roof. It was all I could do to escape with my life!"

From that time on, the robbers never returned to the house. However, the four Bremen Musicians liked the house a lot and decided to stay. They never got to Bremen, but they lived happily ever after anyway.