

The Town Musicians of Bremen

A Fairy Tale by the Brothers Grimm

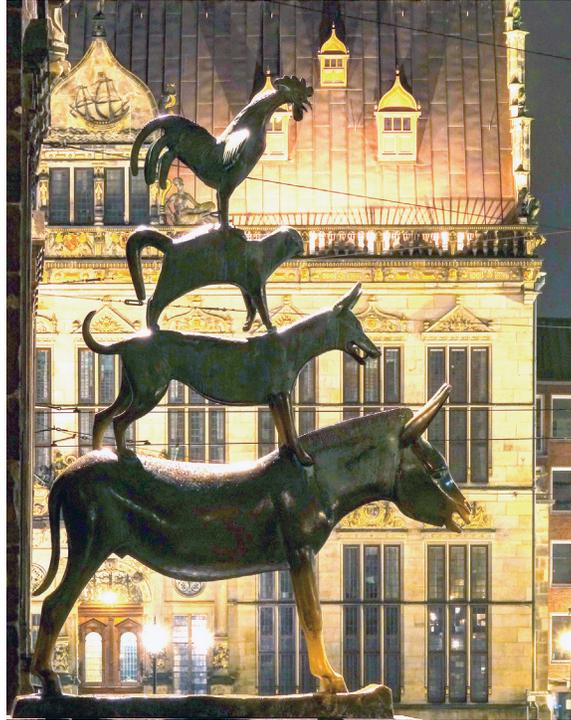


Foto: Jürgen Howaldt via Wikimedia Commons

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

Once upon a time there was an old donkey. He became too old to work. So his owner planned to get rid of him. But Donkey had other ideas. He decided to go to the city of Bremen and become a town musician.

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

Soon, the pair came across an old cat lying in the road. The old cat had a story similar to Donkey and Dog. Donkey invited Cat to join their band bound for Bremen and Cat gladly agreed.

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Toward midday, the three animals came across an old rooster. Like the other animals, Rooster had served his master well. But he was now old and no longer useful. The group was happy to invite Rooster to join their band bound for Bremen.

Together, the foursome continued down the long road to Bremen. At last it got too dark to travel. The animals began to settle in a forest for the night. From his perch in a tree, Rooster could see the lights from a house in the 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 they approached the house, they heard loud booming voices. 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 goods. The animals devised a plan to scare away the robbers.

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, they looked like a 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 noisy song as they crashed through the window together.

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

It was warm and dry inside the house. The four animals were famished. They finished off the leftovers from the robbers' grand feast. Tired, they blew out the lights and went to sleep.

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Sometime later, the robbers looked back at the house and saw that it had gone dark. Everything in the house appeared to be quiet. The captain sent one of the robbers to go back and investigate.

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 stabbed me in the leg with a knife, and then a giant hit me with a wooden club. A fourth man on the roof began shouting, 'Bring the rascal here!' 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. They decided to stay. They never got to Bremen. But they lived happily ever after.