

Sirko

Once upon a time there was a man who owned a dog named Sirko who was very old. One day the owner threw him out of the house. Poor Sirko wandered over the fields feeling very bitter.

“I served my master many long years. I tried my best to please him, and now in my old age he begrudges me even a crumb of bread and has chased me out of the house. Sirko wandered around forlornly thinking about his misfortune when all of a sudden he saw a wolf coming toward him.

“Why are you roaming around by yourself?” asked the wolf. And Sirko replied, “Because my master has turned me out of the house.”

Said the wolf to him, “Would you like me to help you so that your master will take you back?”

“Oh, if you would only do that I’d pay you back for sure,” replied Sirko.

Then the wolf said, “Well, here is my plan, so listen carefully. When your master and mistress leave the house to work in the fields, they will take the baby with them. You must follow close behind, so that when your mistress puts the baby near the wheat sheaves I’ll know where it is, and will take it away. You must follow after me, and snatch it from me. I’ll pretend to be scared of you and will let go of it.”

At harvest time the master and mistress went out into the field to reap. The woman put her little child down near some sheaves and then went off to reap beside her husband. Suddenly, the wolf ran up and snatched the baby and raced across the field. Sirko ran after the wolf and his master cried out, “Sic ‘em, Sirko, sic ‘em!”

Sirko managed to overtake the wolf, seize the baby and return it to his master. Then the latter drew out from his bag some bread and a piece of salt pork and said, “Here Sirko: eat up! This is for saving the baby from the wolf!”

When his master and mistress returned home from work in the evening they took Sirko with them.

When they arrived the man said to his wife, "Dear, cook up a good batch of buckwheat dumplings and add lots of pork fat to them."

When the dumplings were ready, they gave Sirko a place at the table and his master sat near him and said, "Serve up the dumplings, dearie, and we'll have a fine supper." So the wife did that. The man himself put some in a soup plate and cooled them off for Sirko, so he wouldn't get scalded.

As Sirko sat there eating he thought to himself, "I ought to repay the wolf for the benefit I received.

If it weren't for him, I wouldn't be here."

Not long afterward the master, having waited till Lent was over, planned to give his oldest daughter in marriage.

Sirko went off into the field, found the wolf and said to him, "I want you to come to the garden on Sunday evening. I'll then take you into the house and repay you for the favour you did me."

Well, the wolf waited till Sunday came and arrived at the place Sirko had mentioned. That very same day the wedding was being celebrated. Then he took from the table a bottle of wine and lots of meat and gave them to the wolf. The guests wanted to beat the dog, but his master said, "Don't beat Sirko! He did me a great favour and I'll be in debt to him for the rest of his life."

Sirko in the meantime was feeding the wolf with the choicest bits of food. In fact, he fed him so well that the wolf suddenly began to feel very frisky and said, "I am going to sing!" Sirko was afraid of what might happen so he said, "Don't sing or you might regret it. If you'll only keep quiet, I'll give you some more wine."

The wolf had some more to drink and then announced, "Now I really must sing!"

"Don't sing, please," begged Sirko, "or both of us will perish!"

“Oh I can’t stand it! I simply must sing or I’ll burst!” replied the wolf. So the wolf let out a horrible howl from under the table.

The wedding guests started up and they rushed hither and yon. Some wanted to beat up the wolf. But Sirko lay on top of the wolf as though he wanted to strangle him to death. Then the master said, “Don’t hit the wolf because you might kill my Sirko by accident. Don’t worry: he’ll give the wolf his due. Please don’t touch him!”

So Sirko led the wolf out into the field and said to him, “You did me a good turn and I have returned the favour. Now we are quits!” So they shook paws and took leave of each other.