

**Modern History Sourcebook:
Theodor Vernaleken:
The Dog and the Wolf, A Bohemian Folk-Tale**

Source: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/bohemia-dogwolf.html>

THERE was once a peasant family, and, among other domestic animals, they had a house-dog named Sultan. When the dog had grown old, the peasant drove him away, thinking that he could no longer properly attend to his duty. Quite downcast, with drooping head, the dog left the village, and complained to himself: "This is the way I am rewarded for my faithful and hard service; after having spent my years of youth and strength in toil, I am driven away in my weak old age, and no rest is allowed me." Sadly he went on, and wandered about for many days without finding a tolerable shelter. At last, lean and weak after his long wandering, he came to a forest.

There came a wolf out of the forest, ran up to the poor dog, and cried, "Stop, old fellow, now you are in my power, so get ready." When Sultan heard the wolf speak thus, he was in terror, and said, "Dear friend, do but give a good look at me first, and then you will certainly lose all appetite for me; in me you will find the worst meat that you ever tasted, for I am nothing but skin and bones. However, I can give you some good advice." The wolf said, "I want no advice from you, wretched creature! Without your telling me, I know how it would run, namely, that I should spare your life. No! 't is the old story, short and sweet, down my throat you go!"

Then the dog replied, "I have no thought of the kind, for I would not live longer. Use your jaws so long as you enjoy yourself, but I only advise you for the best. Would it not be the best plan to feed me first, and after I have been fattened, you might then gobble me up? The food would not be lost in this way, because you would find it all at one meal in me. There would be a fine dish of meat. What think you, brother wolf?" The wolf said, "Agreed, provided the feeding does not last long; follow me into my hut." The dog did this, and both now went deeper into the forest. Arrived at the hut, Sultan crept in, but the wolf went on to get some game for the poor weak dog.

When he came back, he threw his bag before Sultan, and Sultan made a good supper. The next day the wolf came and said to the dog, "Yesterday you ate, today I will eat." The dog replied, "But what have you taken into your head, dear wolf? Why, as to yesterday's food, I scarce know that I had it." The wolf was very cross; but he had to put up with it, and go into the forest a second time to hunt down some fresh game for the dog. In this way Sultan contrived to put off the wolf so long that at last he felt strong enough to take up the cudgels with him. The wolf kept on hunting, and brought his prey to the dog; but himself ate little or nothing, that Sultan might get enough. And so it came to pass that the dog gained in flesh and strength, while the wolf equally fell off.

On the sixth day the wolf came up to the dog and said, "Now, I think you are ripe!" Sultan replied, "Oh, yes; in fact I fed myself so well that I will fight it out with you if you

won't let me go." Said the wolf, "You jest! Consider I have fed you for six whole days, yes, and eaten nothing myself, and now you want me to go away empty? No, no, that will never do!" Then Sultan replied, "In one respect you are right, but how do you think you can be justified in eating me up?" "'Tis the right of the strong over the weak," said the wolf. "Good!" said the dog, "you have given judgment against yourself." With these words he made a bold dash, and before the wolf knew where he was, he lay on the ground overcome by Sultan.

"Because you spared my life, I will not now destroy you, but give you a chance for your own. So choose two comrades; I will do the same; and tomorrow meet me with them in the forest, and we will decide our dispute." They separated to seek their seconds. The wolf went wrathfully deeper into the forest; the dog hastened to the nearest village. After a long talk with the growling bear and the sly fox, the wolf found two comrades. Sultan ran first to the parsonage, and got the great gray cat to go along with him. Thence he turned his steps to the court of the local magistrate, and found in the brave cock his second comrade.

It was hardly daybreak when the dog was with his companions on the way. He all but surprised his enemies in a deep sleep. The wolf opened his eyes first, awoke his companions, and said to the bears "You can climb trees, can't you? Be so good as to get up this tall fir tree, and look out and see whether our enemies are coming on." Up went the bear, and as soon as he had got to the top, he called down, "Run, our enemies are here, close at hand, and what mighty enemies! One rides proudly along, and carries many sharp sabers with him that glisten brightly in the morning sun; behind him there soberly advances another, dragging a long iron bar after him. O dear! O dear!" At these words the fox was so frightened that he thought it most advisable to take to his heels. The bear hastily scrambled down out of the tree, and crept into a dense thicket, so that only just the end of his tail peeped out.

The foes came on. The wolf, seeing himself deserted by his companions, was about also to take to his heels, when Sultan confronted him. One spring, and the dog held the wolf by the throat, and put an end to him. Meanwhile the cat observed in the bushes the point of the bear's tail as it moved, and snapped at it, thinking to catch a mouse. In terror the bear came out of his hiding-place, and fled in all haste up a tree, thinking that there he would be safe from foes. But he was deceived, for there was the cock before him. When the cock saw the bear on the tree, he sprang to the next bough, and to the next, and so on. The bear was beside himself, and in terror he fell down and lay dead as a doornail. So ended the battle.

The news of Sultan's heroic deeds and those of his comrades spread far and wide, even to that village where Sultan had formerly served. The consequence was that the peasant family took back again their faithful house-dog and lovingly cared for him.

Source:

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Scanned by Jerome S. Arkenberg, Cal. State Fullerton. The text has been modernized by Prof. Arkenberg.

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