# The Old Sultan

A farmer had a faithful dog named Sultan, who had grown old and lost all his teeth, so that he could no longer grip anything firmly. At one time the farmer stood with his wife in front of the house door and said, "I'll shoot old Sultan dead tomorrow; he's good for nothing now." The wife, who felt pity for the faithful animal, replied, "Since he has served us so faithfully for so many years, we could well give him the bread of mercy." "Nonsense," said the man, "you're not right in the head: he has not a tooth left in his mouth, and no thief is afraid of him; he can go now. If he has served us, he has received his good meals in return."

The poor dog, who was lying stretched out in the sun not far away, had heard everything and was sad that tomorrow was to be his last day. He had a good friend, the Wolf, to whom he crept out in the evening into the forest and lamented the fate that awaited him. "Listen, old chap," said the Wolf, "be of good cheer, I will help you out of your trouble. I have thought of something. Tomorrow very early your master goes with his wife into the hay, and they take their little child with them because no one remains at home. They are accustomed to laying the child behind the hedge in the shade during the work: lie down beside it, just as if you wanted to guard it. I will then come out of the forest and seize the child: you must chase after me eagerly, as if you wanted to snatch it away from me again. I will drop it, and you bring it back to the parents, who will then believe you saved it and are far too grateful to do you any harm: on the contrary, you will come into complete favor, and they will let you lack for nothing."

The plan pleased the dog, and as it was planned, so it was carried out. The father screamed when he saw the wolf running through the field with his child, but when old Sultan brought it back, he was glad, petted him and said, "Not a hair of your head shall be harmed; you shall eat the bread of mercy as long as you live." To his wife, however, he said, "Go home at once and cook old Sultan a soft bread porridge, which he doesn't need to bite, and bring the pillow from my bed, which I give him for his bed." From now on old Sultan had it as good as he could wish. Soon afterwards the Wolf visited him and rejoiced that everything had turned out so well. "But old chap," he said, "you will surely turn a blind eye if I take a fat sheep from your master at some opportunity. It's hard to make a living nowadays." "Don't count on that," answered the dog, "I remain faithful to my master; I cannot allow that." The Wolf thought this was not said in earnest, crept up in the night and wanted to get the sheep. But the farmer, to whom the faithful Sultan had betrayed the wolf's plan, lay in wait for him and gave him a sound thrashing with the flail.

The wolf had to flee, but shouted to the dog, "Wait, you wretched fellow, you shall pay for this."

The next morning the Wolf sent the boar and had the dog summoned out into the forest, where they wanted to settle their business. Old Sultan could find no ally but a cat who had only three legs, and as they went out together, the poor cat limped along and at the same time stretched her tail up high in pain. The Wolf and his ally were already at the place, but when they saw their opponent coming, they thought he was carrying a saber with him, because they took the raised tail of the cat for it. And when the poor creature hopped along on three legs, they thought nothing else but that it picked up a stone each time to throw at them. Then they were both afraid: the wild boar hid in the leaves, and the wolf jumped up a tree. The dog and the cat, when they arrived, wondered that no one showed himself. But the wild boar had not been able to hide completely in the leaves, and its ears still stuck out. While the cat looked around carefully, the boar wiggled its ears: the cat, thinking a mouse was moving there, sprang at it and bit heartily into it. Then the boar rose with a loud scream, ran away and called out, "The culprit is sitting up there in the tree." The dog and the cat looked up and saw the Wolf, who was ashamed that he had shown himself so cowardly and accepted peace from the dog.