



CHARACTER BUILDING LESSONS

SOMMER-TIME STORIES

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THE TOWN MUSCIANS OF BREMEN

Story Description

Individuals with a sunny attitude understand that the ending of one opportunity in life often opens the door for a new one. Carrying big loads of grain is easy for young donkeys, but what happens when they get too old to be of use? One old donkey takes off on a journey of rediscovery, picking up an old dog, cat, and rooster along the way.

Intending to combine their musical talents to start a band, this lively crew finds another surprising way to benefit the community. With kindness for one another and good teamwork, they reap great rewards for a future full of happiness.

This charming retelling of a classic Brother's Grimm fable emphasizes the significance of kindness, teamwork, and never giving up.



Main Character Traits

Teamwork/Helping and Encouraging Others/Civic Virtue

Other Character Traits

Using your talents, having goals, diligence, friendship, self-esteem, perseverance, and courage

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Helping and Encouraging Others, Friendship	Civic virtue
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Always Have a Goal, Self-esteem, Perseverance

For many years the donkey faithfully carried heavy sacks of grain to the mill for his master. But one day the donkey heard his master tell his wife, “The donkey is much too old for this kind of work. We need to get rid of him.”

As the donkey walked to the barn, he groaned, “Ohhhh! I’m just useless, old, and good for nothing. No wonder my master wants to get rid of me. I’ve got to find a place to go, but what can I do? I’m too old to carry heavy loads.” That night he was so sad that he could not sleep. Suddenly his eyes lit up. “Moaning and groaning doesn’t help my problems. I used to play the guitar. Why don’t I put together a band for Bremen?”

The donkey had to stop focusing on himself and get rid of the self-pity. Instead, he concentrated on how to solve his problem. When he realized that he could play the guitar in a band, he decided to work towards that goal. It is difficult to pity oneself if you are busy working towards a goal.

Helping and Encouraging Others, Friendship

The next morning the donkey jumped up and began walking to Bremen. Along the way he saw a hunting dog groaning. “What’s wrong with you?” asked the donkey.

“I used to be good at hunting,” said the dog, “but now I’m too old. My master wants to get rid of me. I’m not good for anything, and I don’t know what to do.”

“Cheer up,” said the donkey. “I felt the same way. Instead of groaning, I decided to do something. I’m putting together a band for Bremen.”....

As they traveled together, they saw a cat whining. “What’s wrong?” asked the donkey.

“I used to catch mice for my owner,” the cat said, “but now I’m too old. I can’t run like I used to. My owner doesn’t want me, and I don’t know what to do.”

“I’ve heard you sing,” said the donkey. “You have an excellent voice. You’re not too old to sing. Come and join our band.”....

As they walked along the road, they saw a rooster crowing with all his might. “What are you doing?” asked the donkey. “This is not the time for you to be crowing.”

“Tomorrow they are having a feast,” explained the rooster, “and they want to roast me. So I’m crowing as hard as I can for the last time.”

“You’re a great singer,” said the donkey. “Come and join our band. We’re going to Bremen. You can sing with us.”

The donkey not only offered his friendship, but also offered help and encouragement to the other animals. He was able to help others and himself at the same time.

Teamwork, Courage

As they were resting, a rain drop fell on the rooster's head. "It's beginning to rain!" he yelled. "We need to find a better place to stay."

"I see a light," said the cat. They quickly headed towards the light.

"It's a house!" the dog exclaimed. "It would be a good place for us to get out of the rain." When they reached the house, they found the door closed.

"I hear men laughing," said the rooster.

Being the tallest, the donkey said, "I'll take a peek." He looked inside and was shocked. "I see four men feasting," he whispered, "and a table covered with gold coins!"

"They must be robbers," said the cat.

"Oh, oh!" said the dog. "I heard my master say that the Bremen bank was robbed."

"What should we do?" asked the donkey.

They all began making suggestions. Then the rooster said, "Let's try to scare them."

"If we make loud noises," said the dog, "it should scare the robbers, and they'll run away."

"Great idea," said the cat and the donkey. The donkey put his hoofs on the windowsill. The dog jumped on the donkey. The cat climbed on the dog, and the rooster flew on top of the cat

Then the donkey said, "One, two, three, shout as loud as you can!" The donkey brayed, the dog barked, the cat meowed, and the rooster crowed. It sounded so loud that the robbers jumped for fright.

When the robbers looked at the window, they screamed, "It's a four-headed ghost! Let's get out of here!" The robbers raced outside as fast as they could go.

By working together, the animals were able accomplish what none of them could have accomplished alone. This is always true of teamwork. However, remember that the best teamwork will not have any one person who stands out as the best or as doing the most. The work is shared and the praise is also shared. In addition, the animals demonstrated courage because they could have been caught by the robbers, but didn't let that prevent them from doing what was right.

Friendship

"We shouldn't let this food go to waste," said the dog.

"You're right," said the donkey. They went inside and had a great meal.

When they were full, the rooster said, "It's nighttime. Let's find a place to sleep."

The donkey found a pile of straw in the outside shed, and the dog lay down by the door. The cat curled up on top of a chair, and the rooster flew to a nearby windowsill.

Friends eat, sleep, and play together. These animals continued to show their friendship.

Civic virtue

The police came to the house and looked inside. When they saw the gold, they exclaimed,

“That’s the gold that was stolen from the bank! We’ve been looking a very long time for these robbers.”

The donkey told what had happened and about their band. Then an officer said, “I saw

four fearful men walking down the road.”

“They’re probably the robbers,” said the donkey. “We’ll run to see if they are the ones.”

“Great!” exclaimed the police. “We’ll follow.”

It was now early morning. The cat and rooster jumped on the donkey, and the donkey and the dog raced down the road. When they came to the four men, the cat yelled, “That’s them!”

When the robbers tried to run away, each of the animals attacked one of them. Then the police were able to arrest them. The next day the police told the mayor of Bremen what had happened. He also said the donkey, dog, cat, and rooster were putting together a band. The mayor gathered the town together and said, “We’ve been searching everywhere for these bank robbers.” Then, looking at the donkey, dog, cat, and rooster, he said, “Since you helped us catch the robbers, we’re giving you their house. And we are also honoring you as, “The Town Musicians of Bremen!”

“Hoorayyyy!” shouted the people.

By helping the town, the animals demonstrated civic virtue by helping the police catch the robbers. In turn, the town rewarded the animals for their courageous actions.

Use Your Talents and Persevere

Then the donkey played his guitar, the dog beat his drum, the cat meowed, and the rooster

crowed. The people cheered wildly. When they were finished, the cat said, “I’m sure glad we did something useful.”

“And we were able to bring joy to the people,” added the dog.

“And we did a good deed,” crowed the rooster.

“And we didn’t give up because of hard times,” said the donkey. The four musicians went to their new house and lived happily together.

Because the animals persevered and used their talents, they were able to bring joy to the townspeople and were able to live happily together in their new home.

Questions

1. Why did the donkey think he was too old, useless, and good for nothing? *He had overheard his master say that he was too old to work and that they should get rid of him.*

2. What did the donkey decide to do to solve his problem? *He decided to put a band together and to play his guitar in it.*

3. Why was the dog depressed? *He was too old to hunt and his master wanted to get rid of him.*

4. What did the dog decide to do? *He decided to join the donkey's band and play the drums in it.*

5. What was wrong with the cat? *She was too old to run fast and catch mice, so her owner didn't want her anymore.*

6. What did the cat decide to do? *She joined the donkey and dog and was going to sing in the band.*

7. Why was the rooster crowing in the middle of the day? *The next day his owner was going to roast him, so he wanted to crow for the last time.*

8. What did the rooster decide to do? *He decided to sing in the band.*

9. Why did the animals decide to go to the house? *They hoped to get out of the rain.*

10. Why did the animals think the men in the house were the robbers? *They thought the men were the robbers because their table was covered with gold coins.*

11. What did the animals decide to do? *They decided to try to scare the robbers into running away.*

12. What loud noise did each animal make? *The donkey brayed, the dog barked, the cat meowed, and the rooster crowed.*

13. What did the robbers think the animals were? *The robbers thought that the animals were a four-headed ghost.*

14. When the leader of the robbers came back to the house, what happened to him? *The cat jumped on him, spit, screeched, and clawed him. The rooster crowed as loud as he could. The dog bit his leg, and the donkey gave him a swift kick.*

15. What did the robber think had happened? *He thought that ghosts had attacked him. He thought one had screamed and scratched his face; that*

another had yelled, “What did he do? What did he do?”; that another had taken a knife and stabbed his foot, and that the last ghost had kicked him so hard that he went flying.

16. How did the police catch the robbers? *The animals went with the police and identified the robbers. Then they each attacked one of the robbers.*

17. How did the town reward the animals? *The town gave the animals the robbers’ house. They also honored them as “The Town Musicians of Bremen!”*

18. At the end of the story, how did the animals feel? *The cat was glad they had done something useful. The dog was happy that they had brought joy to the people. The rooster was glad to have done a good deed, and the donkey felt good about not giving up even though times got hard.*