

Herr Korbes

There were once a cock and a hen who wanted to take a journey together. So the cock built a beautiful carriage, which had four red wheels, and harnessed four mice to it. The hen seated herself in it with the cock, and they drove away together. Not long afterwards they met a cat who said, "Where are you going?" The cock replied, "We are going to the house of Herr Korbes." - "Take me with you," said the cat. The cock answered, "Most willingly, get up behind, lest you fall off in front. Take great care not to dirty my little red wheels. And you little wheels, roll on, and you little mice pipe out, as we go forth on our way to the house of Herr Korbes."

After this came a millstone, then an egg, then a duck, then a pin, and at last a needle, who all seated themselves in the carriage, and drove with them. When, however, they reached the house of Herr Korbes, Herr Korbes was not there. The mice drew the carriage into the barn, the hen flew with the cock upon a perch. The cat sat down by the hearth, the duck on the well-pole. The egg rolled itself into a towel, the pin stuck itself into the chair-cushion, the needle jumped on to the bed in the middle of the pillow, and the millstone laid itself over the door. Then Herr Korbes came home, went to the hearth, and was about to light the fire, when the cat threw a quantity of ashes in his face. He ran into the kitchen in a great hurry to wash it off, and the duck splashed some water in his face. He wanted to dry it with the towel, but the egg rolled up against him, broke, and glued up his eyes. He wanted to rest, and sat down in the chair, and then the pin pricked him. He fell in a passion, and threw himself on his bed, but as soon as he laid his head on the pillow, the needle pricked him, so that he screamed aloud, and was just going to run out into the wide world in his rage, but when he came to the house-door, the millstone leapt down and struck him dead. Herr Korbes must have been a very wicked man!

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