Once there lived a peasant who had a good dog, and as the dog grew old it left off barking and guarding the yard and the storehouses: its master would no longer nourish it, so the dog went into the wood and lay under a tree to die.

Then a bear came up and asked him, “Hello, Dog, why are you lying here?”

“I have come to die of hunger. You see how unjust people are. As long as you have any strength, they feed you and give you drink; but when your strength dies away and you become old they drive you from the courtyard.”

“Well, Dog, would you like something to eat?”

“I certainly should.”

“Well, come with me; I will feed you.”

So they went on. On the way a foal met them.

“Look at me,” said the bear, and he began to claw the ground with his paws. “Dog, O dog!”
“What do you want?”

“Look, are my eyes beautiful?”

“Yes, Bear, they are beautiful.”

So the bear began clawing at the ground more savagely still. “Dog, O dog, is my hair disheveled?”

“It is dishevelled, Bear.”

“Dog, O dog, is my tail raised?”

“Yes, it is raised.”

Then the bear laid hold of the foal by the tail, and the foal fell to the ground. The bear tore her to pieces and said, “Well, Dog, eat as much as you will, and when everything is in order, come and see me.”

So the dog lived by himself and had no cares, and when he had eaten all and was again hungry, he ran to the bear.

“Well, my brother, have you done?”

“Yes, I have done, and again I am hungry.”

“What! Are you hungry again? Do you where your old mistress lives?”

” I do.”

“Well, then, come; I will steal your mistress's child out of the cradle, and do you chase me away and take the child back. Then you may go back; she will go on feeding you, as she formerly did, with bread.”

So they agreed, and the bear ran up to the hut himself and stole the child out of the cradle: the child cried, and the woman burst out, hunted him, hunted him, but could not catch him; so they came back, and the mother wept, and the other women were afflicted; from somewhere or other the dog appeared, and he drove the bear away, took the child and brought it back.
“Look,” said the woman, “here is your old dog restoring your child!” So they ran to meet him, and the mother was very glad and joyous.

“Now,” she said, “I shall never discharge this old dog any more.”

So they took him in, fed him with milk, gave him bread, and asked him only to taste the things.

And they told the peasant, “Now you must keep and feed the dog, for he saved my child from the bear; and you were saying he had no strength!”

This all suited the dog very well, and he ate his fill, and he said, “May God grant health to the bear who did not let me die of hunger!” and he became the bear’s best friend.

Once there was an evening party given at the peasant’s house. At that time the bear came in as the dog’s guest.

“Hail, Dog, with what luck are you meeting? Is it bread you are eating?”

“Praise be to God,” answered the dog, “it is no mere living, it is butter week. And what are you doing? Let us go into the izba (hut). The masters have gone out for a walk and will not see what you are doing. You come into the izba and go and hide under the stove as fast as you can. I will await you there and will recall you.”

“Very well.”

And so they went into the izba. The dog saw that his master’s guests had drunk too much, and made ready to receive his friend. The bear drank up one glass, then another, and broke it. The guests began singing songs, and the bear wanted to chime in. But the dog persuaded him: “Do not sing, it would only do harm.”

But it was no good, for he could not keep the bear silent, and he began singing his song. Then the guests heard the noise, laid hold of a stick and began to beat him. He burst out and ran away, and just got away with his life.

Now the peasant also had a cat, which had ceased catching mice, and even playing tricks. Wherever it might crawl it would break something or spill something. The peasant chased the cat out of the house. But the dog saw that it was going to a miserable life without any food, and secretly began bringing it bread and butter and
feeding it. Then the mistress looked on, and as soon as she saw this she began beating the dog, beat it hard, very hard, and saying all the time, ” Give the cat no beef, nor bread.”

Then, three days later, the dog went to the courtyard and saw that the cat was dying of starvation. “What is the matter?” he said.

“I am dying of starvation : I was able to have enough whilst you were feeding me.”

“Come with me.”

So they went away. The dog went on, until he saw a drove of horses, and he began to scratch the earth with his paws and asked the cat, ” Cat, O cat, are my eyes beautiful?”

“No, they are not beautiful.”

“Say that they are beautiful!”

So the cat said, “They are beautiful.”

“Cat, O cat, is my fur dishevelled?”

“No it is not dishevelled.”

“Say, you idiot, that it is dishevelled.”

“Well, it is dishevelled.”

“Cat, O cat, is my tail raised?”

“No, it is not raised.”

“Say, you fool, that it is raised.”

Then the dog made a dash at a mare, but the mare kicked him back, and the dog died.

So the cat said, ” Now I can see that his eyes are very red, and his fur is dishevelled, and his tail is raised. Good-
bye, brother Dog, I will go home to die.”

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