

Bastianelo

Adapted by Mistress Dervila ni Leanon

Based on World Folktales, page 362. I have modified it greatly.

Italian

Time: About 5:38

The wine ran out in the middle of the wedding feast. The bride got up, saying

“I will go and fetch more from the cellar.” She went down into the cellar, starting filling the pitcher *[pause]* and saw a butcher’s knife stuck in the wall above the wine cask.

“Oh, no!”, she said, “Suppose we have a son, and we name him Bastianelo, and he comes down here to get wine, and the butcher knife falls on him and kills him! Oh, my poor son!” And she stood there crying as the wine overflowed the pitcher.

Soon the bride’s mother got up saying,

“I’ll see what’s taking her so long.” And she went down into the cellar, and saw her daughter standing there crying while wine poured onto the floor.

“Daughter! Why are you crying?”

“Oh mother! Suppose I have a son, and we call him Bastianelo, and he comes down here to get wine, and that butcher knife falls on him and kills him! Oh, my poor son!” And her mother began to cry as well, “Oh, my poor grandson!” And the wine still poured onto the floor.

Soon the bride’s father got up saying,

“I’ll see what’s taking them so long.” And he went down into the cellar and saw his wife and his daughter standing there crying while wine still poured out onto the floor.

“Wife! Daughter! Why are you crying?”

“Oh, father! Suppose I have a son, and we call him Bastianelo, and he comes down here to get wine, and that butcher knife falls on him and kills him! Oh, my poor son!” And her mother and her father cried, “Oh, my poor grandson!” And the wine still poured out onto the floor.

Finally the groom went down into the cellar and saw his bride and her parents crying while wine still poured out onto the floor.

[upset] “What is wrong here?” And his bride recounted her tale of woe, and her parents nodded and wept. The groom pulled the butcher knife out of the wall, and - well, it was too late for the wine, all of it was on the floor.

[angry] “I don’t believe this! The wedding feast not even over and all of you mourning our imaginary son’s death! I’m leaving, and I swear I won’t be back until I find three people sillier than all of you!” Then they had a reason to cry, and they begged him to stay, but on he went.

He traveled for a few days, then he saw a man with a wheelbarrow running in and out of a house. The wheelbarrow was empty, but the man was sweating and panting. Curious, the groom walked up to him and asked

“What are you doing?”

“The house is dark, so I’m filling my wheelbarrow with sunlight and bringing it into the house. But there’s so much dark in there that it’s just not working.”

The groom walked inside, opened the shutters, and said

“Your problem is solved.”

“Oh, thank you, thank you so....” But the groom was walking away, and he said to himself
“There’s one.”

A few days later he was staying in an inn when he heard the most amazing bumps and thumps from the room next door. Curious, the groom walked in and found a man holding his trousers out and jumping about.

“What are you doing?”

“I’m trying to jump into my trousers. I’m getting old, and it takes longer and longer every day.” The groom sat the man down on the bed, put his trousers on one leg at a time, and said,

“Your problem is solved.” The man said

“Oh, thank you, thank you so....” But the groom was walking away, and he said to himself,
“There’s two.”

A few more days passed, and the groom came to a walled city. There was a wedding party outside the gate, gathered around the bride on a horse, and they were all arguing. Curious, the groom walked up and asked

“What are you doing?”

“The bride is too tall to pass through the gate when she’s on the horse. We’re trying to decide whether to cut off the bride’s head or the horse’s legs.”

Our groom pushed the bride’s head into the horse’s neck, slapped the horse, and they went through. The groom said

“Your problem is solved.”

“Oh, thank you, thank you so....” But our groom was walking away, back to his own bride. And they did have a son, and they named him Bastianelo, and he is still living to this day.

Full bibliography of source:

Clarkson, Atelia, and Gilbert B. Cross. World Folktales. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1980. ISBN: 0-684-17763-3

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