

The uninvited guests

- A folktale from Iran





One upon a time, there was an old lady who lived in a little mud house in a little village in Iran. The garden of her house was just the size of a sandpit. In the garden, there was a tree, just the size of a matchstick. Around the garden were four mud walls.



One afternoon, she put on her large floral chador and went out to meet her neighbors. As her chador started flowing in the air like a bride's veil, she suddenly felt that it was about to start raining, and a moist smell started coming off the mud walls. Then came heavy rain and thunder.



The old lady went back inside and snuggled under the quilt. All of a sudden there was:

‘Knock, knock, knock!’

It was a tiny sparrow, dripping wet. Water drops were falling down the sparrow’s beak:

‘Drip, drip, drip!’

Its wet wings were flapping fast: ‘Flutter, flutter, flutter!’

The old lady took the sparrow into the room and covered its wings with a piece of cloth.



‘Knock, knock, knock!’

The old lady rushed to the door and asked: ‘Who is it?’ As soon as she opened the door, a soaking wet crow flew into the house and sprayed water all over the sparrow. The sparrow was about to yell at the crow but, all of a sudden, they heard:

‘Knock, knock, knock!’

And a soaking wet cat trudged into the house.



When the sparrow and the crow saw the cat, they clung to each other and started shaking in fear.

‘Meow, don’t be afraid of those whom you don’t know, we are all friends in this house,’ the cat smiled slyly.



That evening, more wet guests arrived:

A watchdog, and a large cow pushed its way into the house causing an earthquake.

All the animals were forced against the walls when the cow entered.

But the little sparrow just sat in its corner and laughed: 'Hehe-hehe.'



‘Z-z-z-z-z.’ Now the only sounds to be heard in the little house were of snoring. The little sparrow and Mr. Crow had each found a spot on the windowsill while the kitty, the watchdog and the huge cow had taken each their corner in the room.



The next morning, when the old lady stretched her arms and opened her eyes, she saw the entire house moving:

The crow burst in, carrying some firewood in its beak.

The dog used its strong lungs to make a fire in the fireplace.

The cat had laid a delicious breakfast on a cloth on the floor.

The large cow had been to the town and bought stone baked bread.

And the sparrow sang a beautiful melody.



They all sat down on the floor for breakfast and ate stone baked bread with feta cheese, drank tea and loved it.

Just when they had their last sip of tea, the sun came out. It was not raining anymore, which probably meant that it was time for them to leave.

But the thought of saying goodbye to the kind old lady made them very sad.



With a lump in her heart, the old lady looked at all the animals and said:

‘If it was up to me, I would have let all of you stay but my garden is only as big as a sandpit, there is not much room in it. If the little sparrow is to stay, the big cow will have to leave. ‘

‘And what about me who says moo moo moo, gives you milk and butter, too – are you not going to keep me?’ said the big cow. ‘Meow, meow meow,’ said the cat.

‘What about me who says woff woff, beats up thieves, and is rough rough are you not going to keep me?’ the watchdog said. ‘What about me who says choo choo choo, making music for you – are you not going to keep me?’



As it turned out, they all were allowed to stay, on one condition:
Everyone must help around the house and be kind to each other.
That's what they did, and lived happily together for many many years.
And that is how the story ends.



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