

OUR SPARROW. Come, friends, 't is for all of you!

VERY OLD SPARROW. Do you know, stranger bird, that, with these crumbs, you have brought us in all one loaf?

[Our Sparrow drops the crust for the others. At once it changes into INGÉ The birds fly away frightened.]

INGÉ Ah! Now I understand. The loaf had to be made up, crumb by crumb.

[The WICKED ELF suddenly appears.]

WICKED ELF. Come, pretty maid, come to the Elf Hill!

INGÉ No, no! I will not!

WICKED ELF. But we have such pretty things to tell you!

INGÉ I care not for your pretty things! I go to fetch wood for my mother. I go to walk in the mud if need be. Away with you! I'll have none of you! Away, away, I say!

THE GIRL WHO TROD ON THE LOAF



An Old Greek Tale



A LearningIsland.org
Skit

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The Girl Who Trod on the Loaf/An Old Greek Tale
Summary: A skit about a girl who trod on a loaf.

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VERY OLD SPARROW. 'T is a hard winter! Shall we drive away the one who finds food where we find none?

YOUNG SPARROW. And calls us every time!

VERY YOUNG SPARROW. And never eats till we have come!

VERY OLD SPARROW. I've kept in mind the crumbs she has found us. Now, how many do you think?

OLD SPARROW. I cannot say, for I did not think to notice.

VERY OLD SPARROW. There only lacks two or three now of being a loaf.

OTHER SPARROWS (*greatly surprised*). A loaf?

VERY OLD SPARROW (*nodding*). A loaf.

VERY YOUNG SPARROW. Here comes the stranger now!

OLD SPARROW. She brings a crust!

[OUR SPARROW *flies up with a crust in its bill.*]

[All the SPARROWS except Our Sparrow sit on the stone wall.]

YOUNG SPARROW. I say the stranger should be driven away!

VERY YOUNG SPARROW. So say I!

OLD SPARROW. The stranger is a sparrow, but still not a sparrow.

VERY OLD SPARROW. And yet she is only different by a tuft of white feathers.

YOUNG SPARROW. And such a tuft! For all the world like a loaf of bread!

VERY YOUNG SPARROW. I'd think it shame to carry such on *my* head!

OLD SPARROW. I fear 't will shame us all to have this stranger about.

VERY OLD SPARROW. And yet we are not ashamed to eat the crumbs this stranger brings.

OLD SPARROW. Well, 't is true she has been most kind.

THE GIRL WHO TROD ON THE LOAF

SCENE I

TIME: *the day before Christmas.*

PLACE: *Ingé's Mother's home.*

INGÉ

HER MOTHER.

[The MOTHER stands at the kitchen window,
watching for Ingé]

MOTHER. Ah, here she comes at last!

(Short pause. Enter INGÉ)

I have waited long for you, my child. Where have
you been?

(Ingé is silent.)

Have you been to the Elf Hill? Tell me.

INGÉ (hesitating). Just for a little while, mother.

MOTHER. Ingé! Ingé! What have I ever told you?

INGÉ I thought I'd go just this once.

MOTHER (showing sorrow). Ah, Ingé, that's what
you always say.

INGÉ There's no harm talking with the elves.

MOTHER. And I, your mother, say there is harm.

INGÉ But, mother,—they talk so prettily.

SCENE IV

TIME: *one month later.*

PLACE: *same as SCENE III.*

OUR SPARROW.

THE VERY OLD SPARROW.

THE OLD SPARROW.

THE YOUNG SPARROW.

THE VERY YOUNG SPARROW.

THE WICKED ELF.

friendship. I will sing of it! 'T will be my
Christmas song!

[*The Sparrow leaves the hole and flies to the corn.*]

GRETEL. Look, father, there is a sparrow! And
hear it sing! Just hear it!

PEASANT. It is calling the other birds.

GRETEL. Why, it doesn't even touch the corn!

PEASANT. It's waiting to share it with the others.
Is it not a pretty sight? Come, we must go to tell
mother.

MOTHER (*nodding*). Aye! and that's the harm.
They've put such silly ideas into your head.

INGÉ They say 't is friendship makes them talk as
they do.

MOTHER (*indignantly*). Friendship! 'T is
friendship, is it, to tell you not to fetch the wood?

INGÉ They say 't will spoil my hands.

MOTHER. Out upon them and their pretty talk!
You shall go there no more. Do you hear me, Ingé?

INGÉ (*pouting*). I hear.

MOTHER. Now take this loaf of bread to your
sick aunt. Say to her 't is her Christmas gift.

INGÉ But, mother, I must cross the muddy road to
go there.

MOTHER. Well, you are neither sugar nor salt.

INGÉ I'll spoil my shoes!

MOTHER. You think of your shoes, and your aunt lies ill?

INGÉ Wait till spring and the mud will be gone.

MOTHER. Wait till spring and your aunt will be gone! Here is the loaf—now off with you!

[Ingé takes the loaf and goes, but not willingly.]

PEASANT. Well, 't is true there are only three ears left at home, but the birds must have their Christmas dinner.

[He places the corn on the wall.]

GRETEL. There's none about to see it!

PEASANT. Oh, some bird will soon find it!

GRETEL. But will it call the others?

PEASANT. We'll wait to see. Come, we'll sit there on the log.

[They go to a log near by.]

FIRST STONE. There, little Sparrow, say you now there is no kindness?

SECOND STONE. Or love?

THIRD STONE. Or friendship?

SPARROW. No, no! I can never say that again. The peasant's heart is full of kindness and love and

SECOND STONE. Come, lift up your head and sing!

THIRD STONE. Come, sing us your Christmas song!

SPARROW. Sing! I have nothing to sing about.

FIRST STONE. Sing of your friends.

SECOND STONE. Sing of their love for you.

THIRD STONE. Sing of their kindness to you.

SPARROW. Talk not to me of friends, or love, or kindness! There's none in the world.

[Enter a PEASANT with his little GRETEL. The Peasant carries two ears of corn.]

PEASANT. Now, my Gretel, we'll place the corn here on the old wall.

GRETEL. Mother thought you brought too much.

SCENE II

TIME: *a few minutes later.*

PLACE: *the muddy road.*

INGÉ

THE WICKED ELF.

[INGÉ is seen stopping at the muddy road.]

INGÉ 'T is too wide to leap!

[The WICKED ELF suddenly appears on the opposite side of the road.]

WICKED ELF. Good day to you, pretty maid!

INGÉ Good day to you, dear Elf!

WICKED ELF. Wilt cross this muddy road?

INGÉ I must.

WICKED ELF. Then I'll tell you how to do it and not so much as wet your shoe.

INGÉ Oh, thank you, dear Elf!

WICKED ELF. Throw down your loaf and—

INGÉ (*showing surprise; interrupting*). Throw down the loaf?

WICKED ELF. Why, yes,—to use it for a stepping-stone.

INGÉ But 't will spoil the bread!

WICKED ELF. But 't will save your shoes!

INGÉ Well, that's true—

WICKED ELF. A pretty maid ne'er wears a muddy shoe.

SCENE III

TIME: *the day following Christmas Day.*

PLACE: *an old stone wall by a brook.*

THE SPARROW. FIRST STONE.

THE PEASANT. SECOND STONE.

GRETEL. THIRD STONE.

[*The SPARROW sits in a hole in the wall.*]

FIRST STONE. Come, come, be not so sad, little Sparrow!



""TIS SINKING! WHAT SHALL I DO?"

INGÉ That's true, too—

WICKED ELF. Come, then, throw down the loaf!

INGÉ Well, I'll do it!

(She throws the loaf and steps upon it.)

'T is sinking! What shall I do?

WICKED ELF. Why, then, jump off!

INGÉ *(trying to jump)*. I can't! Don't you see I can't?

WICKED ELF. Ha, ha! You're fastened to it!

INGÉ 'T is drawing me down! Help me! Help me!

WICKED ELF. There's no help for you.

INGÉ No help? What do you mean?

WICKED ELF. You must go down with the loaf.

INGÉ I pray you help me! See how I'm sinking!
The mud will soon be over my shoes!

WICKED ELF. The mud will soon be over your head!

INGÉ (*weeping*). Save me! Save me!

WICKED ELF. Will you be saved by magic?

INGÉ Yes, yes!

WICKED ELF. Listen, then—I'll change you into a bird. Are you willing?

INGÉ Yes, yes! Quick now, before I sink deeper!

WICKED ELF (*nodding head three times*). A sparrow shall you be! Change, now change!

[*Ingé changes into a SPARROW, with a tuft of white feathers, just the shape of a loaf of bread, upon its head. The Sparrow flies from the mud.*]

SPARROW. Now change me back into Ingé

WICKED ELF. You shall remain as you are.

SPARROW (*showing surprise*). Remain as I am?

WICKED ELF (*nodding*). Until you can change yourself back.

SPARROW. And when will that be?

WICKED ELF. When the loaf has gone from your head.

SPARROW. The loaf from my head? What do you mean?

WICKED ELF (*going*). Fly away to the brook and see! Ha, ha, ha!

(*She runs away, calling back.*)

Fly away to the brook and see! Ha, ha, ha!