

An Apple Dumpling for Supper

An English Folktale

Retold by Patti Hutchison



There was once a woman who wanted an apple dumpling for supper. She had plenty of flour, butter, and sugar. But she had no apples. She had a huge plum tree full of round, red plums. But you can't make an apple dumpling out of plums. There is no use trying.

The woman could almost taste her warm, sweet, apple dumpling. "Maybe I can trade my plums for some apples," she said to herself. She decided to try.

As the woman walked up the road, she came to a garden. The sweet smell of lilacs, lilies, and roses filled the air. A couple stood in the garden, shouting at each other. They looked angry.

"Can I help?" she asked the couple.

"My husband has eaten all of the berries. I have nothing to make jam out of," replied the wife.

"I have some tasty plums for your jam," said the woman. "I will trade them for some apples. I want to make a dumpling for my supper."

"We have no apples," replied the wife. "But we can give you a beautiful bunch of flowers."

And so the woman went on her way. She sniffed the colorful flowers she carried. Soon she came upon a handsome young man. His face was very sad.

“What’s wrong?” asked the woman.

“I’m on my way to see my lady, but I have no gift to give her,” the young man said sadly.

“Here, take her these pretty flowers,” the woman told him.

“You are very kind,” said the young man. “These will make her very happy. Will you take this little dog in return?”

The woman could hardly say no. So on she went with the little dog in her basket. As she walked along, she chuckled to herself, “A bunch of flowers for a basket of plums; a little dog for a bunch of flowers. This is a funny world of give and take. I might just get my apple dumpling yet.”

Sure enough, she had not gone far when she saw a tree full of red, ripe apples. A sad little man sat on the porch next to it.

“That’s a fine tree of apples,” the woman called to him.

“Yes, but they are no good to me. I sit here alone every day. I would give them all for a little dog to keep me company,” the old man said, frowning.

Just then, the little dog began to bark. He jumped out of the basket and ran to the old man. The old man laughed. He told the woman to pick all the apples she wanted. Soon she was on her way home. Her basket was heavy with apples.

“If you try long enough and hard enough, you can always have an apple dumpling for supper.” The woman smiled as she wiped the crumbs from her mouth.