

DUMPLINGS AND WEDDING RINGS

A story about marriage, family and selflessness

A cold wind shivered down the center of town, rattling teeth, whiskers and Mrs. Tidbits gown.

She hurried past the shoppers heading straight for the door of 'CLUCKERS' dry goods department store.

With list in hand and mind in a whirl, she'd shop for the wedding of her dear little girl.

Hurrying into the warm, cheery store, she made for the staircase to the small second floor.

So much to be done in such a short time, with a mountain of work looming to high to climb.

She buzzed in and around the counters and aisles, inspecting gloves, gowns and veils in the latest Bog styles.

She checked handsome tuxedos with starched pleated shirts, then bridesmaids gowns with long ruffled skirts.

Next...

Off to the florists for flowers and bows, then the baker for a cake reaching up past her nose.

Her friends would help with the food she required, those dainty, delectable treats all desired.

Mr. Tidbits would handle the horse drawn carriage, the idyllic transportation for this idyllic Bog marriage.

The Tidbits had made one thing perfectly clear, this would be the most opulent event of the year.

No matter the place, the effort or price, even down to the
throwing of gold dusted rice.

After all...they came from a long line of very fine mice,
making sure that their daughter never had to think twice
about life with its' worries, its' twist and its' turns,
never letting her fret about life's dreary concerns.

So...

Vermina stayed home staying close to the fire, the fierce winter
wind killing all her desire,
to shop with her mother, ever though she'd soon wed, cringing at
the thought as she plopped on her bed.

Vermina met her groom some two years before and being smitten
with love, he asked for her paw,
in marriage with hopes it would last a lifetime, not realizing in
marriage one must work overtime.

They would wait to be married till graduating from school,
remaining chaste and faithful, obeying God's rule.
Their lives would be golden, filled with love and good cheer,
starting with the most luxurious wedding that year.

The critters crowded into the little Bog church, whilst a chorus
of Mockingbirds sang from their perch.
Garlands of flowers held by silken white lace, hung gently from
pews in a fragrant embrace.

Vermina floated down the petal strewn aisle, her groom waiting
patiently, looking on with a smile.
Candles flickered softly, casting a warm golden glow, as Hartlie
pronounced blessings on Vermina and Beau.
One man, one woman as husband and wife, declaring their love and
commitment for life.

Then they were off in a whirlwind of cheers, starting off their new life with no doubts and no fears.

The honeymoon now over, they settled into their house, a country Bog cottage just fit for a mouse.

But...

How quickly they got mired in problems none did foresee, including their parents who'd most likely agree, they'd neglected to teach them before they were grown, that your much better off just living alone, if both aren't willing to give more than receive, causing marriages to fail and families to grieve.

Most say...

"Oh our marriage will be different and sheer perfection, there will be no room for spite or rejection."

But those in love can be deaf, dumb and stupid and that's proven by most who've been shot at by cupid!

Well...

Beau had hoped that Vermina would be, an able wife and mother to their growing family.

So it came as a shock when she was not very keen, to do laundry, to cook or even to clean.

Vermina on the other hand was angry and sad, feeling her choice of a husband had been really quite bad.

He was always working and never at home, causing her and the children to feel very alone.

She demanded he help with the children and house, he complained that her nagging was too much for a mouse.

Of late she was quiet, of late he was loud, of late they were distant, hostile and too proud,

to sit down and listen to what each had to say, while their anger boiled over to their childrens dismay.

Well...out in their garden one hot afternoon, they were arguing over which bushes to prune.

Beau wanted to cut them clean down to the ground, but Vermina insisted on a hedgie, green mound.

Ignoring her pleas and grabbing his saw, he sliced through the hedges starting a war.

"I'm sick of you always wanting your way!" Beau yelled to Vermina who without further delay screamed, ***"I'm sick of you too! You're a rude, rotten mouse, I want you out of my life and out of this house!!"***

"That's fine by me, I'll get my half and leave! I'm getting out of this jail and gettin me a reprieve!"

Before Vermina knew just what he was doing, he'd climbed atop the house and was sawing and hewing.

With the very same saw he'd cut down the hedge, he now used on the roof as he shouted this pledge.

***"Before the sun sets I'll cut this house in two, there'll be one half for me and the other for you!
Then I'm cutting the couch, the table and chairs, the bed, the bath...they'll all come in pairs!!!"***

Then...Vermina ran inside, took a pot off the range, went back outside and in a heated exchange, started hurling hot dumplings at Beau and his saw shrieking, ***"Here's your half of the dumplings, to bad they're still raw!!!"***

But he sliced through the dumplings which flew past his head, laughing and sawing like a mad man instead.

Their children couldn't believe what it was they were seeing, fear gripping their hearts while they all were agreeing, that unless help arrived, this would end in divorce, as their parents fought on with no sign of remorse.

Colby, the eldest of the terrified brood yelled, *"I'm fetching Hartlie, he'll end this feud, we've gotta have help, our family's in trouble, what we need is a miracle or we'll end up as rubble!"*

Heart pounding and broken, he ran to the place where he knew help was offered with hope, love and grace.

Trembling, he knocked on the old Bog church door, then crept quietly in and knelt on the floor.

"Sweet Jesus," he whispered, *"we need help real bad, my family's torn up and us kids are so sad.*

We stay sick and scared and don't know what to do, you're all that we've got Lord, so we're counting on you.

Seems like our parents don't care bout us kids, they just worry bout themselves and blowing their lids.

Guess those wedding vows didn't come from their heart...

So much for marriage and "Till death do us part!"

I came to get Hartlie, but I guess he's not here, reckon I'll trust you now and try not to fear...

In Jesus name...Amen"

With shoulders stooped and tears on his face, he started for home with the dread of that place.

Halfway there though, he felt a warm breeze, then startled as Hartlie came out from some trees.

"Hi Colby, didn't mean to scare you, I'm just out for a walk, is something wrong, would you like to talk?"

"Oh yes!" cried Colby, so grateful God heard, telling Hartlie about how terribly absurd his parents had become, always seething and pouting, never listening to each other, just screaming and shouting.

They walked on chatting, Hartlie soothing his fear, assuring Him Jesus would always be near.

By now...

The little mouse house was just round the curve, Hartlie prayed for wisdom, Colby prayed for nerve.

When they finally arrived, what a mess they saw, Beau covered in dumplings with a pile in each paw.

He was firing back as good as he got and sorry to say he was a pretty good shot.

Vermina was plastered from head to toe, reaping a harvest from the dumplings she'd sow.

That this scene was ridiculous Hartlie needed no proof, and things nearly got worse when Beau slipped off the roof.

But the only thing hurt from the fall was his pride, dumplings breaking his fall and saving his hide.

Everyone gasped as this was the last straw, then...they busted out laughing till they could laugh no more.

The children still laughing, were all sent inside, Hartlie then asked their parents if they'd swallow their pride.

"Are you sick enough yet of all this fighting? Are you ready to stop the rage and backbiting?!"

Your kids hearts are at stake, you're all they've got, do you love them enough to give it one more shot?

You need help from God to fix the mess in your lives, it takes unselfish love that must come from both sides!

So...

Is it your way or God's? You must now both decide. Play it God's way and heal or ignore and divide."

Beau quietly wiped the mess from his face, turned to Vermina and with a loving embrace whispered..." *The last thing I want is my family in bits, but I was too mad to admit we were hurting our kids."*

"*The same goes for me,"* Vermina then sighed, "*We can't do this alone, we've tried and we've tried.*

We've both been so selfish, demanding our way, looks like our children had a high price to pay!"

"*That's right,"* said Hartlie, "*but it's never too late, to live a life filled with loved instead of with hate.*

Only God can repair what you two tore apart, but if you are willing He'll give you a new start.

If you'll stay close to Him, you'll be amazed to see, love restoring and healing your entire family.

There's nothing impossible with God on your side, His love is too deep, His forgiveness too wide."

Beau nodded...

"Our life will be different from now on, you'll see, cuz we're putting God first in this family!"

Vermina smiled wiping the dumplings away, "*Hartlie...I'm cooking more dinner, would you like to stay?"*

"*I'd love to Vermina, as it's 'soul food' we need..."* and for the first time, in a long time, they both agreed.

The end

Or could it be...THE BEGINNING

THE BEGINNING

Scriptures from the Holy Bible that teach us about marriage, responsibility and selflessness.

2 Corinthians 6:14-15 Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness?

Mark 10:9 "Let no one split apart what God has joined together."

Genesis 2:24 This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

Ephesians 4:31-32 Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Ephesians 5:21 Further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Ephesians 5:25 For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church.

Ephesians 5:33 So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever would believe in Him should not perish, but have Life everlasting.

This series was written in an effort to help children understand that no problem can overcome us if we are walking close to Jesus, trusting in His love and obeying His commandments.