

The Days of the Week

Hans Christian Andersen

The days of the week once wanted to be free to get together and have a party. But each of the seven days was so occupied, the year around, that they had no time to spare. They wanted a whole extra day; but then they had that every four years, the intercalary day that comes in February for the purpose of keeping order in chronology.

On the intercalary day they would get together for a party, and, as February is the month of carnivals, they would come in costumes of each one's taste and choice; they would eat well, drink well, make speeches, and be complimentary and disagreeable to one another in unrestrained comradeship. While the vikings of olden times used to throw their gnawed-off bones at each other's heads during mealtime, the days of the week intended to throw jokes and sarcastic witticisms such as might be in keeping with the innocent carnival spirit.

So when it was intercalary day, they assembled.

Sunday, foreman of the days of the week, appeared in a black silk cloak; pious people thought he was dressed for church in a minister's gown, but the worldly minded saw that he was attired in a domino for merriment and that the flashing carnation he wore in his buttonhole was a little red theater lantern on which it said, "All sold out; see now that you enjoy yourselves!"

Monday, a young fellow related to Sunday, and very fond of pleasures, came next. He left his workshop, he said, whenever he heard the music of the parade of the guard.

"I must go out and listen to Offenbach's music; it doesn't go to my head or to my heart; it tickles my leg muscles; I must dance, have a few drinks, get a black eye, sleep it off, and then the next day go to work. I am the new part of the week!"

Tuesday is Tyr's day, the day of strength.

"Yes, that I am," said Tuesday. "I take a firm grip on my work; I fasten Mercury's wings onto the merchant's boots, see that the wheels in the factory are oiled and turning, that the tailor sits at his table, and that the street paver is by his paving stones; each attends to his business, for I keep my eye on all. Accordingly, I am here in a police uniform and call myself Tuesday, a well-used day! If this is a bad joke, then you others try to think of a better one!"

"Then I come," said Wednesday. "I'm in the middle of the week. The Germans call me Herr Mittwoch. I stand like a journeyman in a store and like a flower in the midst of the other esteemed days of the week! If we all march up in order, then I have three days before me and three days behind; they are like an honor guard, so I should think that I am the most prominent day in the week!"

Thursday appeared dressed as a coppersmith, with a hammer and a copper kettle, as a symbol of his noble descent.

"I am of the highest birth," he said, "paganish, godlike! In the Northern countries I am named after Thor, and in the Southern countries after Jupiter, who both knew how to thunder and lighten, and that has remained in the family!"

And then he beat his copper kettle, thereby proving his high birth.

Friday was dressed as a young girl, and called herself Freia, also Venus for a change, depending upon the language of the country in which she appeared. She was of a quiet, cheerful character, she said, but today she felt gay and free, for this was intercalary day, which, according to an old custom, gives a woman the right to dare propose to a man and

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not have to wait for him to propose to her.

Saturday appeared as an old housekeeper with a broom and other cleaning articles. Her favorite dish was beer soup, though at this festive occasion she did not request that it be served for everyone, only that she get it, and she got it.

And so the days of the week had their party.

Here they are in print, all seven of them, ready for use as tableaux at family parties. There you can make them as funny as you wish; we give them here as a joke on February, the only month with an extra day.

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