

The Seven Schwabians

A Pike and a Rake

The *Seven Schwabians* is a series of German folktales. First recited by Hans Sachs in 1545, the fables relate the many misguided adventures of seven Schwabian would-be heroes oft portrayed as innocent or foolish.



Welcome to Schwabenland, Home of Heroes

This retelling of two early tales includes embellishments known only to the exhibitor.

Long, long ago, there were seven Schwabian friends who mostly discussed their dreams of becoming the greatest of heroes in the history of Schwabia while imbibing a few of the local brewmaster's products.



The Schwabian Company of Heroes

All seven agreed it would be a grand idea to travel the world, seek their good fortune, perform extraordinary and wonderful deeds and sample local beer.

As he was the oldest, stoutest and of course, the wisest, Herr Schulz became the group's leader by popular acclaim. The others didn't wish to 'deprive' him of this most honored position!



Preparation for Heroic Quests

The group's members in order were first, Herr Schulz, the second Jackli, the third Marli, the fourth Jergli, the fifth Michal, the sixth Hans, and last but not least, Veitle, the seventh.

One sunny afternoon over a stein of warm beer and a bockwurst or two, they spoke animatedly as they decided to band together as a company of famous adventurers and brave explorers.



True Nectar of the Gods - Beer and Wurst

Each man then recounted stories of their heroes, brave men and riches.

To assure their defense against any of the future dangers during their quest, they decided it would be very wise to procure a very long pike or spear as all seven could carry it at the same time.



Meister Pfifferling at his Forge

The very famous Augsburg blacksmith, Pfifferling, known for his fine smithing skills, would make it. Pfifferling then constructed an extra long spear such that seven bold men might hold it.

The blacksmith finished the shaft and attached a steel pike, polishing it until it shown like an evening star. The spear was presented with great pride and all examined every small detail.



Detailed Inspection of a Splendid Pike

Shortly after this thorough inspection, Veitle exclaimed: “This must be the most splendid spear ever made.” Herr Schulz, the bravest and most manly of them, was first in line to grip it tightly.

Now one day, while enjoying the warm sunshine in the month of July, they agreed they should go on a quest both daring and dangerous. There were whispered rumors of a terribly ugly and fierce ogre living near Lake Constance.



The Secret Cave of Ogres

Wishing to become famous quickly, they naturally set off immediately in order to investigate this alarming rumor and perhaps have a stout beer as well as deal with the monster forthwith.

“This will be the most magnificent of conquests!” said Herr Schulz. The six others agreed boisterously. Veitli then called out, “Off we go to slay the evil monster,” and they began their search for the unspeakable horror.



On the Darkening Path to Adventure

They trudged quite some way but still had quite a fair distance to go before reaching the village they sought and it was getting late in the afternoon.

It happened then that they came to a peaceful meadow as the sun was just about to set. “We’ll camp here for the night,” Herr Schulz said. The others agreed and looked for a comfortable place to sleep as it was nearly dark.



A Dangerous Sounding Noise?

Very suddenly, a loud buzzing sound came from a tall green bush behind them. Herr Schulz cried, “Listen. What’s that?” Something nearly invisible flew past their heads unexpectedly.

In the dark they couldn't see what it was and didn't know giant hornets and May beetles lived in this area. And wouldn't you know it - a second low buzzing sound came quickly after the first.



May Beetles in the Height of Summer Days

As a cold damp sweat swept over Herr Schulz's entire body, his panic made him shout breathlessly to his nervous comrades. "Good heavens my good fellows, it sounds just like war drums!"

“The enemy’s war drums!” screamed Jackli who was behind Herr Schulz. Marli sniffed the night air. “I smell fire and hear the enemy’s trumpets!”



Trumpet's Blast to Arms

Michal smelled something strange but didn't utter a word as a noxious gas spewed upwards from his pants.

Marli said, “Something here is quite troubling I’m sure.” Hans chimed in with “I think I smell the charred odor of burned powder and fuses.”



Defending Against the Murderous Attack

Hearing these last few words, Herr Schulz dropped his end of the spear and ran to the side of the path they were on. He quickly jumped over a wood fence into a farmer’s hay field.

Herr Schulz unwittingly landed directly on the exposed teeth of a hay rake that had been carelessly forgotten in the field. When he stepped on the teeth, the rake immediately flipped upwards and the handle caught him squarely and painfully on his bulbous nose with a tremendously loud thump.



A Vicious Rake Attack

“I surrender, Mercy!” Herr Schulz cried as he gingerly rubbed his now brightly glowing red nose.

Seeing this, the other six members of the band followed, all jumping toward him, and over each other, screaming, “If our leader surrenders, we surrender too. We follow our leader!”



We Know by 40 What Others Never Do

When no ferocious enemy appeared to tie them up and drag them away, they realized the awful truth.

“It must have been my impressively grand imagination,” Herr Schulz said. “Or ours,” said Jackli and Marli. “And ours too,” the others agreed. But, they did inspect the suspicious rake, just in case something was afoul.



Ludwig Richter, Die sieben Schwaben.

Escaping an Attack Most Foul

At that moment, they made a most solemn pact to never tell a soul and to keep the story from becoming known, making them look other than heroes.

They soon swore to one another, the heavens above and the deeps below, that they would never say anything about this incident, unless by the slip of a tongue in a favored pub.



Celebration of a Glorious Quest

With no hesitation and visions of full mugs, they hurried on with the spear before another misfortune might claim them. Well, that is until the giant bull appeared - but that's another story.