

ONE-CHIN, TWO-CHINS, AND THREE-CHINS

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Based on the fairy tale 'One-Eye, Two-Eyes, and Three-Eyes'

Once upon a time, there were three sisters who lived in a cottage in the woods.

The eldest, Juana, was also known as One-Chin, for she had but a single pointy chin right at the bottom of her face. She had rusty red hair, a steely glare, and she ruled her sisters with an iron fist.

The middle sister, Bianca, was sometimes known as Two-Chins, for she was a bit plump, and her round face had a second chin right under her first. She was as soft as her figure and as sweet as her favorite candies, and her light brown hair was as fluffy as cotton candy.

The youngest, Tricia, was nicknamed Three-Chins, for she had grown so fat she sported two entire extra chins beneath her original one. Her coils of hair were so dark they sucked in the light as greedily as she sucked in everything edible.

Juana was as cruel as a whip and Tricia as heartless as a mountain of stone, and between the two of them, they bullied Bianca relentlessly. They forced her to clean the house, fetch the water, and do all the cooking, and what's worse, they never let her have enough to eat.

One midday, when Bianca had finished hoisting the last of Tricia's heavy dishes onto the table in front of her, she asked meekly "Dear sister, perhaps I could share a bit of your food? You'd hardly miss it. You have so much!" Indeed, there was enough food before her sister to feed an army. Bianca could have eaten herself sick and barely made a dent.

Tricia paused mid-spoonful. She let the bowl-sized spoon of mashed potatoes plop back into the cauldron-sized bowl. "I *need* this food. I'm a big girl, if you hadn't noticed. And you – look at you! You're barely half my size. There's hardly anything to you at all! My scraps should be *more* than enough for a girl with only two chins."

Bianca sighed and left Tricia to her gluttony. She turned to her other sister. "Juana?"

Juana opened one eye. She gently lay her tiny spoon down on her tiny, almost bare plate. "Yes?"

"I don't supposed I might have a bite or two of your dinner? Just a small one."

"A bite or two?" Juana sneered. "One or two of *your* oversized bites and my dinner would be gone!"

Juana was an extremely picky eater, who could only stomach tiny meals, and yet she demanded such fine ingredients, and such elaborate preparation, that they took just as much time and money as Tricia's. Tonight, she dined on a smear of liver from a rare white elk, precisely three eggs' worth of talking-fish caviar, and a single spring of golden parsley, with an ortolan for dessert.

"Just look at you!" Juana continued. "Look how fat you are. Why, you're almost twice my size! It won't hurt a girl with two chins to skip a few meals."

And so, once again, all poor Bianca had for dinner were the bits of food left on Tricia's plates. Before she put them into the soapy water, she desperately ran her tongue over them to lap up every last bit. Her cheeks blushed a furious crimson. Look at her, licking up scraps like a dog!

"Someone's got to take the goat down to the field," she said, shaking off the humiliation. There was still work to be done, after all. "Maybe, while I do the dishes, one of your could—"

She looked back at the table. Tricia had leaned back in her chair, snoring loudly, with one meaty hand resting on her huge belly. Juana had also passed out, in a fit of ortolan-induced ecstasy, her own delicate snores drifting out from beneath the lacy cloth.

(For if you didn't know, boys and girls, an ortolan is so decadent and sinful a treat it must be eaten with one's head covered, so that God can't see what you're doing.)

Bianca sighed. It looked she would be responsible for the goat, today, too. And so, stomach

growling, she went and fetched the old creature from the barn and took him to the fields so that he could eat his fill.

Even the goat gets dinner, she thought miserably, but I—I—!

And she sat down beneath a tree and began to cry.

“Why are you crying, pretty maid?” asked a soft and lilting voice. Bianca started, for she hadn’t heard anyone approach. She sat up and wiped at her tears with the hem of her skirt.

“Oh, I’m—I’m not pretty,” she mumbled modestly. “I’m too fat to be pretty. Or else not fat enough.”

“I’d say you’re just about the *perfect* size,” the lovely voice said again. Bianca blinks her red eyes open. There stood in front of her a lovely woman with curly blonde hair and a diaphanous snow-white dress that looked as light and delicate as a breeze. The woman herself was quite plump, and the dress did little to hide it. The pale curve of her belly was visible through the curtains of lace, her soft porcelain arms and legs were bare to the sun, and she had – two chins. Just like Bianca. And she was, indeed, very beautiful.

“I...ah...” Bianca stammered. And then, to her horror, her belly growled. It was no brief, feminine twinge, but a long, hungry, gurgling demand. The rest of her face turned as red as her eyes.

The woman just laughed, heartily and utterly heedless of the way it made her jiggle. “It sounds like you’re hungry!” she said.

“Yes,” Bianca said sheepishly. “I-I didn’t have much lunch.”

“Why don’t you just ask the goat?”

“The what?”

“The goat! Surely you realize that’s a magic goat you have there?”

“I—it is?”

“Of course!” the woman clucked. “Really. What they teaching them these days? That goat will give you as much food as you watch. Just say ‘*Little goat, bleat, bring me something to eat.*’ And then when you’re done, say ‘*Little goat, bleat, I’ve had enough to eat.*’ That’s all there is to it! I can’t believe you didn’t know.”

And, still chuckling and shaking her head, the beautiful plump woman walked on her way. Bianca looked at the goat.

He was chewing grass with a stupid look on his face. He didn’t look even a little magical.

“Little goat, bleat,” Bianca murmured, feeling stupider than ever. “Bring me something to...eat?”

As she spoke the last words, the goat’s head jerked up. He let out an ear-splitting bleat. And in a puff of magical smoke, a table appeared in the middle of the field.

It was vast, at least thirty feet long, made of fine polished wood and inlaid with gold, and lined with equally fine chairs. It looked like it belonged in a king’s castle, and yet here it was, in the middle of a pasture. The scene was so odd, Bianca could scarcely believe it. It could have been an illusion.

But oh, the aromas rising from the dishes on the table! If this was a trick, her nose was just as gullible as her eyes were, for they were well and truly fooled. Bianca’s stomach growled again. Her mouth watered.

It was a feast like she’d never seen. Every dish was fine enough for Juana’s demanding palate, and yet there was so *much* of it—even Tricia couldn’t possibly finish a tenth of it, though she would probably kill herself trying.

Bianca didn’t know where to start, there were so many things to try. “Perhaps if I go around and take a bite of each,” she decided, “then I’ll know what to get more of.”

And so she did, nibbling her way around the table, taking a bit of this, and a bit of that, and a bite here, and a bite there, and a snippet, and a sample, and before long, she’d eaten a little bit of everything and she was full from the bottom of her stomach up to both her chins.

She surveyed the table, which was still groaning under the weight of hundreds of dishes, each missing a single solitary bite. *It was all so good!* she thought, loosening the laces of her tunic. *I want more of that...and that...and that...oh, but I couldn’t possibly!*

But perhaps, she thought as her eyes played across the endless expanse of mouth-watering food, perhaps she *could* manage. Just a *little* more. And so she took a little more of this and a little more of that, one more of these and a few more bites of those.

Now, she told herself, clutching her stomach, *now I really must stop or I'll be sick. Oh, but it's so delicious!*

And she had just a little bit more, and a tiny bit more, and a teensy bit more after that, until she really could not eat one more bite without bursting.

"Little goat, bleat, I've had enough to eat!" she gasped, before she could become tempted again. *More than enough!*

The table disappeared in a puff of smoke, and Bianca waddled home, the goat tottering behind her on his knobby knees. *This is such a handy trick. I can have food whenever I want it!* she thought. She winced. *Though I'm sure I'll never want to eat again!*

Her sisters were furious. "We had to make our own dinner!" Tricia wailed.

"My pate de gorilla gras was overcooked!" Juana snarled.

"My arms feel like rubber from carrying all that food to the table!" Tricia added.

"Clean up this mess!" Juana finished. "It's the least you can do, you lazy thing."

And Bianca did, doing her best to not even look at any of the scraps of leftover food. Her sisters wondered at this.

"Don't you want dinner, Two-Chins?" Juana asked. "I believe Three-Chins left a crust or two."

"Oh, no, I—" Bianca belched, and hastily covered her mouth. "I'm not hungry."

Juana and Tricia looked at each other. Now *this* was strange.

Bianca didn't want any of their leftovers the next day either. Or the next. Or the next.

"She's not eating a thing," Juana mused. "And yet she's certainly not getting any thinner."

Indeed, Bianca was eating so well now that she was quickly going from plump to downright fat. Her seams were starting to strain, and when she reached for things on the high shelves she showed quite a bit more belly peeking out from beneath her tunic than before.

"She must be getting food down in the fields," Juana concluded. "We'd better put a stop to this. Otherwise, we'll have two Three-Chins, and that will just be confusing."

Neither Juana nor Tricia particularly liked walking. Juana ate so little she had no energy, and Tricia weighed so much she found walking exhausting. But one of them had to go, and so they arm-wrestled for it. Tricia won, of course. She didn't even have to push—Juana couldn't hold up her meaty arm even with both hands.

Thus, the next day, as Bianca led the goat down to the fields, One-Chin slipped along silently behind her. She watched as Bianca opened the gate and let the goat through. She watched as she led him into the field—

It was a hot day, and Juana pulled a cloth over her head to keep herself cool. It wouldn't keep her from spying—she could see through the weave.

But the day was *so* hot, and it was *so* nice in the shade, and the cloth over her head reminded her of the ortolan that was still resting daintily in her belly...

Juana slumped against the fence and fell asleep.

She woke up just in time to hide as Bianca huffed and puffed back up the path. *Look at her! She's bulging!* Juana thought, wrinkling her nose in disgust. *She's got to have food out there somewhere.*

But although she searched until darkness fell, and caught her foot in a gopher hole, and fell face-first into goat droppings, she couldn't find a single clue to where the food was hidden. She clomped back well after nightfall, exhausted, sore, and stinking.

"Pathetic," Tricia said, looking at her. "I see you didn't have the *stomach* for the job."

And so it was decided that the next day, Tricia and Juana would follow Bianca together, since Tricia had enough stomach for both of them.

The next day, Tricia made the supreme sacrifice. She stood up after lunch and waddled after

Bianca as fast as she could. It wasn't very fast, but Bianca tended to move rather slower nowadays as well. Still...Bianca hadn't eaten yet, while Tricia had stuffed herself to the gills, as usual.

"Can't you go any faster, Three-Chins?" Juana snarled.

"If you'd just done it right the first time...!" Tricia huffed.

Bianca had just summoned the table and was sitting down to eat when she heard the shrieks of betrayal.

"So!" One-Chin screeched, leaning over the gate. "That's the secret! A magic goat! I should have guessed."

"And you never even thought of sharing it with us, you greedy pig!" Three-Chins accused, leaning over One-Chin. The wooden gate splintered and collapsed, and both sisters followed.

"I'm going to kill that goat!" Three-Chins spluttered, hoisting herself up. "Goat sausages for breakfast tomorrow!"

"Goat liver and truffles," One-Chin said, peeling herself off of the flattened ground.

"Goat curry!"

"Goat eyeball in black sauce!"

"Goat steaks smothered in goat guts."

"Pineal gland of goat over a single grain of rice!"

Bianca shrank back as they approached. Not only was she about to lose her food, she was also about to lose the goat, who was, she realized with a rather sinking feeling, the closest thing she had to a friend. She quivered as four menacing chins loomed above her, intent on tearing it all away.

Tricia sniffed. "That...that smells..."

Her eyes glazed. "That...smells...*good*."

She grabbed a hunk of roast chicken and sank her teeth into it.

"That *is* good," she moaned. "It's the best chicken I've ever had!"

"You'll eat anything," Juana pointed over, dipping her pinky into a bowl of sauce and licking it. Her eyebrows shot up. "Although, this really is...really is...*not bad*."

"Not bad?" Tricia gasped, sinking heavily into a chair, which creaked under her weight. "It's irresistible!" She picked up a glistening meatloaf and devoured it in three huge bites.

"It's actually *good*!" Juana purred, sliding her bony backside into a seat.

"But you've had lunch already!" Bianca protested.

"I've never eaten lunch in my life!" Tricia barked. "*Your* awful cooking is less than nothing next to these exquisite dishes!"

"B-but it's still in there..." Bianca said feebly. Tricia's belly was already so crammed it pressed against the table, and yet she was tearing into the meal as if she hadn't eaten in days. Juana, too, was shoveling food into her mouth in a very un-Juana like way.

Bianca—who was used to going without—had still barely been after to tear herself away from the feast. For her greedy sisters, it was hopeless. They descended into an orgy of gluttony. Even prim Juana was shoveling it in wild-eyed and feral, fancy sauces dribbling down her single chin. Tricia was red-faced from exertion, but kept eating even as the seams of her dress began to pop under the strain of holding her in.

"Wait!" Bianca cried as they both climbed onto the table. "Slow down!"

Tricia lay on her back among the appetizers, her belly bulging like a hillock as she fed coils of sausage into her throat. Juana guzzled cream straight from the dish, like a cat, and now even her slender body was beginning to swell, the lump of food bulging in her belly like a wild pig inside a snake.

I've got to get rid of the table before they burst!, Bianca thought desperately.

"Little goat, bleat, I've had enough to eat!" she cried.

And, with a bleat, the table disappeared. The chairs disappeared. The food disappeared. And so did One-Chin and Three-Chins.

"Wait! Not them!" Bianca said quickly. "Ohhh...little goat, bleat, bring me something to eat!"

And there in front of her was the table, pristine and laden, with no sign of her sisters anywhere.

“It’s always new food,” she realized. “It never has bites already taken out of it when it arrives...”

She thought suddenly of a room somewhere, a room filled with hundreds and hundreds of identical tables, coming when she called, and when she sent them away, going...where?

“Do *you* know where they go?” she asked the goat. “Do you?”

The goat cocked his head at her. It must be said that he had never shown any signs of understanding what was going on in the slightest.

Bianca made the table disappear and come back twice more to be sure. The second time, she put a notch in the wood with her pocket knife. When the table came back, the notch was gone.

Bianca Two-and-a-half-Chins looked around the pasture helplessly. She had to do something. But what was there for her to do?

In the meantime, she may as well have something to eat.

“I suppose,” she said as she started on a delicious, crispy shepherd's pie, “that wherever they’ve gone, at least there’s plenty of food there.”

A single hysterical giggle escaped her lips.

“I hope they don’t mind eating *my* leftovers, for a change!”