Author: Jacob & Wilhelm Grimm [More [Titles by Grimm](http://www.readbookonline.net/books/Grimm/210/)]

A rich farmer was one day standing in his yard inspecting his fields and gardens. The corn was growing up vigorously and the fruit-trees were heavily laden with fruit. The grain of the year before still lay in such immense heaps on the floors that the rafters could hardly bear it. Then he went into the stable, where were well-fed oxen, fat cows, and horses bright as looking-glass. At length he went back into his sitting-room, and cast a glance at the iron chest in which his money lay.

Whilst he was thus standing surveying his riches, all at once there was a loud knock close by him. The knock was not at the door of his room, but at the door of his heart. It opened, and he heard a voice which said to him, "Hast thou done good to thy family with it? Hast thou considered the necessities of the poor? Hast thou shared thy bread with the hungry? Hast thou been contented with what thou hast, or didst thou always desire to have more?" The heart was not slow in answering, "I have been hard and pitiless, and have never shown any kindness to my own family. If a beggar came, I turned away my eyes from him. I have not troubled myself about God, but have thought only of increasing my wealth. If everything which the sky covers had been mine own, I should still not have had enough."

When he was aware of this answer he was greatly alarmed, his knees began to tremble, and he was forced to sit down.

Then there was another knock, but the knock was at the door of his room. It was his neighbour, a poor man who had a number of children whom he could no longer satisfy with food. "I know," thought the poor man, "that my neighbour is rich, but he is as hard as he is rich. I don't believe he will help me, but my children are crying for bread, so I will venture it." He said to the rich man, "You do not readily give away anything that is yours, but I stand here like one who feels the water rising above his head. My children are starving, lend me four measures of corn." The rich man looked at him long, and then the first sunbeam of mercy began to melt away a drop of the ice of greediness. "I will not lend thee four measures," he answered, "but I will make thee a present of eight, but thou must fulfil one condition." "What am I to do?" said the poor man. "When I am dead, thou shalt watch for three nights by my grave." The peasant was disturbed in his mind at this request, but in the need in which he was, he would have consented to anything; he accepted, therefore, and carried the corn home with him.

It seemed as if the rich man had foreseen what was about to happen, for when three days were gone by, he suddenly dropped down dead. No one knew exactly how it came to pass, but no one grieved for him. When he was buried, the poor man remembered his promise; he would willingly have been released from it, but he thought, "After all, he acted kindly by me. I have fed my hungry children with his corn, and even if that were not the case, where I have once given my promise I must keep it." At nightfall he went into the churchyard, and seated himself on the grave-mound. Everything was quiet, only the moon appeared above the grave, and frequently an owl flew past and uttered her melancholy cry. When the sun rose, the poor man betook himself in safety to his home, and in the same manner the second night passed quietly by. On the evening of the third day he felt a strange uneasiness, it seemed to him that something was about to happen. When he went out he saw, by the churchyard-wall, a man whom he had never seen before. He was no longer young, had scars on his face, and his eyes looked sharply and eagerly around. He was entirely covered with an old cloak, and nothing was visible but his great riding-boots. "What are you looking for here?" the peasant asked. "Are you not afraid of the lonely churchyard?"

"I am looking for nothing," he answered, "and I am afraid of nothing! I am like the youngster who went forth to learn how to shiver, and had his labour for his pains, but got the King's daughter to wife and great wealth with her, only I have remained poor. I am nothing but a paid-off soldier, and I mean to pass the night here, because I have no other shelter." "If you are without fear," said the peasant, "stay with me, and help me to watch that grave there."

"To keep watch is a soldier's business," he replied, "whatever we fall in with here, whether it be good or bad, we will share it between us." The peasant agreed to this, and they seated themselves on the grave together.

All was quiet until midnight, when suddenly a shrill whistling was heard in the air, and the two watchers perceived the Evil One standing bodily before them. "Be off, you ragamuffins!" cried he to them, "the man who lies in that grave belongs to me; I want to take him, and if you don't go away I will wring your necks!" "Sir with the red feather," said the soldier, "you are not my captain, I have no need to obey you, and I have not yet learned how to fear. Go away, we shall stay sitting here."

The Devil thought to himself, "Money is the best thing with which to get hold of these two vagabonds." So he began to play a softer tune, and asked quite kindly, if they would not accept a bag of money, and go home with it? "That is worth listening to," answered the soldier, "but one bag of gold won't serve us, if you will give as much as will go into one of my boots, we will quit the field for you and go away."

"I have not so much as that about me," said the Devil, "but I will fetch it. In the neighbouring town lives a money-changer who is a good friend of mine, and will readily advance it to me." When the Devil had vanished the soldier took his left boot off, and said, "We will soon pull the charcoal-burner's nose for him, just give me your knife, comrade." He cut the sole off the boot, and put it in the high grass near the grave on the edge of a hole that was half over-grown. "That will do," said he; "now the chimney-sweep may come."

They both sat down and waited, and it was not long before the Devil returned with a small bag of gold in his hand. "Just pour it in," said the soldier, raising up the boot a little, "but that won't be enough."

The Black One shook out all that was in the bag; the gold fell through, and the boot remained empty. "Stupid Devil," cried the soldier, "it won't do! Didn't I say so at once? Go back again, and bring more." The Devil shook his head, went, and in an hour's time came with a much larger bag under his arm. "Now pour it in," cried the soldier, "but I doubt the boot won't be full." The gold clinked as it fell, but the boot remained empty. The Devil looked in himself with his burning eyes, and convinced himself of the truth. "You have shamefully big calves to your legs!" cried he, and made a wry face. "Did you think," replied the soldier, "that I had a cloven foot like you? Since when have you been so stingy? See that you get more gold together, or our bargain will come to nothing!" The Wicked One went off again. This time he stayed away longer, and when at length he appeared he was panting under the weight of a sack which lay on his shoulders. He emptied it into the boot, which was just as far from being filled as before. He became furious, and was just going to tear the boot out of the soldier's hands, but at that moment the first ray of the rising sun broke forth from the sky, and the Evil Spirit fled away with loud shrieks. The poor soul was saved.

The peasant wished to divide the gold, but the soldier said, "Give what falls to my lot to the poor, I will come with thee to thy cottage, and together we will live in rest and peace on what remains, as long as God is pleased to permit."

[The end]

Lazy Spinner

In a certain village there once lived a man and his wife, and the wife was so idle that she would never work at anything; whatever her husband gave her to spin, she did not get done, and what she did spin she did not wind, but let it all remain entangled in a heap. If the man scolded her, she was always ready with her tongue, and said, "Well, how should I wind it, when I have no reel? Just you go into the forest and get me one." "If that is all," said the man, "then I will go into the forest, and get some wood for making reels." Then the woman was afraid that if he had the wood he would make her a reel of it, and she would have to wind her yarn off, and then begin to spin again. She bethought herself a little, and then a lucky idea occurred to her, and she secretly followed the man into the forest, and when he had climbed into a tree to choose and cut the wood, she crept into the thicket below where he could not see her, and cried,

"He who cuts wood for reels shall die,  
And he who winds, shall perish."

The man listened, laid down his axe for a moment, and began to consider what that could mean. "Hollo," he said at last, "what can that have been; my ears must have been singing, I won't alarm myself for nothing." So he again seized the axe, and began to hew, then again there came a cry from below:

"He who cuts wood for reels shall die,  
And he who winds, shall perish."

He stopped, and felt afraid and alarmed, and pondered over the circumstance. But when a few moments had passed, he took heart again, and a third time he stretched out his hand for the axe, and began to cut. But some one called out a third time, and said loudly,

"He who cuts wood for reels shall die,  
And he who winds, shall perish."

That was enough for him, and all inclination had departed from him, so he hastily descended the tree, and set out on his way home. The woman ran as fast as she could by by-ways so as to get home first. So when he entered the parlour, she put on an innocent look as if nothing had happened, and said, "Well, have you brought a nice piece of wood for reels?" "No," said he, "I see very well that winding won't do," and told her what had happened to him in the forest, and from that time forth left her in peace about it.

Neverthless after some time, the man again began to complain of the disorder in the house. "Wife," said he, "it is really a shame that the spun yarn should lie there all entangled!" "I'll tell you what," said she, "as we still don't come by any reel, go you up into the loft, and I will stand down below, and will throw the yarn up to you, and you will throw it down to me, and so we shall get a skein after all." "Yes, that will do," said the man. So they did that, and when it was done, he said, "The yarn is in skeins, now it must be boiled." The woman was again distressed; She certainly said, "Yes, we will boil it next morning early." but she was secretly contriving another trick.

Early in the morning she got up, lighted a fire, and put the kettle on, only instead of the yarn, she put in a lump of tow, and let it boil. After that she went to the man who was still lying in bed, and said to him, "I must just go out, you must get up and look after the yarn which is in the kettle on the fire, but you must be at hand at once; mind that, for if the cock should happen to crow, and you are not attending to the yarn, it will become tow." The man was willing and took good care not to loiter. He got up as quickly as he could, and went into the kitchen. But when he reached the kettle and peeped in, he saw, to his horror, nothing but a lump of tow. Then the poor man was as still as a mouse, thinking he had neglected it, and was to blame, and in future said no more about yarn and spinning. But you yourself must own she was an odious woman!

[The end]

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**The Hare and the Hedgehog**

**Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm**

This story was actually made up, young ones, but it really is true, for my grandfather, who told it to me, always said whenever he told it, "it must be true, my son, otherwise it couldn't be told." Anyway, this is how the story goes:

It was on a Sunday morning at harvest time, just when the buckwheat was in bloom. The sun was shining bright in the heaven, the morning wind was blowing warmly across the stubble, the larks were singing in the air, the bees were buzzing in the buckwheat, and the people in their Sunday best were on their way to church, and all the creatures were happy, including the hedgehog.

The hedgehog was standing before his door with his arms crossed, humming a little song to himself, neither better nor worse than hedgehogs usually sing on a nice Sunday morning. Singing there to himself, half silently, it suddenly occurred to him that while his wife was washing and drying the children, he could take a little walk into the field and see how his turnips were doing. The turnips were close by his house, and he and his family were accustomed to eating them, so he considered them his own.

No sooner said than done. The hedgehog closed the house door behind him and started down the path to the field. He hadn't gone very far away from his house at all, only as far as the blackthorn bush which stands at the front of the field, near the turnip patch, when he met up with the hare, who had gone out for a similar purpose, namely to examine his cabbage.

When the hedgehog saw the hare, he wished him a friendly good morning. The hare, however, who was in his own way a distinguished gentleman, and terribly arrogant about it, did not answer the hedgehog's greeting, but instead said to the hedgehog, in a terribly sarcastic manner, "How is it that you are running around in the field so early in the morning?"

"I'm taking a walk," said the hedgehog.

"Taking a walk?" laughed the hare. "I should think that you could better use your legs for other purposes."

This answer made the hedgehog terribly angry, for he could stand anything except remarks about his legs, for by nature they were crooked.

"Do you imagine," said the hedgehog to the hare, "that you can accomplish more with your legs?"

"I should think so," said the hare.

"That would depend on the situation," said the hedgehog. "I bet, if we were to run a race, I'd pass you up."

"That is a laugh! You with your crooked legs!" said the hare. "But for all I care, let it be, if you are so eager. What will we wager?"

"A gold louis d'or and a bottle of brandy," said the hedgehog.

"Accepted," said the hare. "Shake hands, and we can take right off."

"No, I'm not in such a hurry," said the hedgehog. "I'm very hungry. First I want to go home and eat a little breakfast. I'll be back here at this spot in a half hour."

The hare was agreeable with this, and the hedgehog left.

On his way home the hedgehog thought to himself, "The hare is relying on his long legs, but I'll still beat him. He may well be a distinguished gentleman, but he's still a fool, and he'll be the one to pay."

Arriving home, he said to his wife, "Wife, get dressed quickly. You've got to go out to the field with me."

"What's the matter?" said his wife.

"I bet a gold louis d'or and a bottle of brandy with the hare that I could beat him in a race, and you should be there too."

"My God, man," the hedgehog's wife began to cry, "are you mad? Have you entirely lost your mind? How can you agree to run a race with the hare?"

"Hold your mouth, woman," said the hedgehog. "This is my affair. Don't get mixed up in men's business. Hurry up now, get dressed, and come with me."

What was the hedgehog's wife to do? She had to obey, whether she wanted to or not.

As they walked toward the field together, the hedgehog said to his wife, "Now pay attention to what I tell you. You see, we are going to run the race down the long field. The hare will run in one furrow and I in another one. We'll begin running from up there. All you have to do is to stand here in the furrow, and when the hare approaches from the other side, just call out to him, 'I'm already here.'"

With that they arrived at the field, the hedgehog showed his wife her place, then he went to the top of the field. When he arrived the hare was already there.

"Can we start?" said the hare.

"Yes, indeed," said the hedgehog. "On your mark!" And each one took his place in his furrow.

The hare counted "One, two, three," and he tore down the field like a windstorm. But the hedgehog ran only about three steps and then ducked down in the furrow and remained there sitting quietly.

When the hare, in full run, arrived at the bottom of the field, the hedgehog's wife called out to him, "I'm already here!"

The hare, startled and bewildered, thought it was the hedgehog himself, for as everyone knows, a hedgehog's wife looks just like her husband.

The hare thought, "Something's not right here." He called out, "Let's run back again!" And he took off again like a windstorm, with his ears flying from his head. But the hedgehog's wife remained quietly in place.

When the hare arrived at the top, the hedgehog called out to him, "I'm already here!"

The hare, beside himself with excitement, shouted, "Let's run back again!"

"It's all right with me," answered the hedgehog. "For all I care, as often as you want."

So the hare ran seventy-three more times, and the hedgehog always kept up with him. Each time the hare arrived at the top or the bottom of the field, the hedgehog or his wife said, "I am already here!"

But the hare did not complete the seventy-fourth time. In the middle of the field, with blood flowing from his neck, he fell dead to the ground.

The hedgehog took the gold louis d'or and the bottle of brandy he had won, called his wife from her furrow, and happily they went back home.

And if they have not died, then they are still alive.

Thus it happened that the hedgehog ran the hare to death on the Buxtehude Heath, and since that time no hare has agreed to enter a race with a hedgehog.

The moral of this story is, first, that no one, however distinguished he thinks himself, should make fun of a lesser man, even if this man is a hedgehog. And second, when a man marries, it is recommended that he take a wife from his own class, one who looks just like him. In other words, a hedgehog should always take care that his wife is also a hedgehog, and so forth.

* Source: Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, "Der Hase und der Igel," *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children's and Household Tales -- Grimms' Fairy Tales), 7th ed. (Berlin, 1857), no. 187.
* The Grimms added this tale to the fifth edition of their collection (1853).
* The Grimms received this tale in 1840 from Karl Georg Firnhaber, a professor in Kassel. Firnhaber apparently copied the Low German text almost verbatim from a fable written by Wilhelm Christian Schröder and published anonymously in the *Hannoversches Volksblatt*, no. 51 (April 26, 1840).
* Translated from Low German by D. L. Ashliman. © 2000.
* Aarne-Thompson type 275A\*

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# The Jew in the Thorns

## Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

Once upon a time there was a rich man who had a servant who served him diligently and honestly. Every morning he was the first one out of bed, and at night the last one to go to bed. Whenever there was a difficult job that nobody wanted to do, he was always the first to volunteer. He never complained at any of this, but was contented with everything and always happy.

When his year was over, his master gave him no wages, thinking, "That is the smartest thing to do, for it will save me something. He won't leave me, but will gladly stay here working for me."

The servant said nothing, but did his work the second year as he had done before, and when at the end of this year he again received no wages, he still stayed on without complaining. When the third year had passed, the master thought it over, then put his hand into his pocket, but pulled out nothing.

However, this time the servant said, "Master, I have served you honestly for three years. Be so good as to give me what by rights I have coming to me. I would like to be on my way and see something else of the world."

"Yes, my good servant," answered the old miser, "you have served me without complaint, and you shall be kindly rewarded."

With this he put his hand into his pocket, then counted out three hellers one at a time, saying, "There, you have a heller for each year. That is a large and generous reward. Only a few masters would pay you this much."

The good servant, who understood little about money, put his wealth into his pocket, and thought, "Ah, now that I have a full purse, why should I worry and continue to plague myself with hard work?"

So he set forth, uphill and down, singing and jumping for joy.

Now it came to pass that as he was passing by a thicket a little dwarf stepped out, and called to him, "Where are you headed, Brother Merry? You don't seem to be burdened down with cares."

"Why should I be sad?" answered the servant. "I have everything I need. Three years' wages are jingling in my pocket.

"How much is your treasure?" the dwarf asked him.

"How much? Three hellers in real money, precisely counted."

"Listen," said the dwarf, "I am a poor and needy man. Give me your three hellers. I can no longer work, but you are young and can easily earn your bread."

Now because the servant had a good heart and felt pity for the dwarf, he gave him his three hellers, saying, "In God's name, I won't miss them."

Then the dwarf said, "Because I see that you have a good heart I will grant you three wishes, one for each heller. They shall all be fulfilled."

"Aha," said the servant. "You are a miracle worker. Well, then, if it is to be so, first of all I wish for a blowpipe that will hit everything I aim at; second, for a fiddle, that when I play it, anyone who hears it will have to dance; and third, that whenever I ask a favor of anyone, it will be granted."

"You shall have all that," said the dwarf. He reached into the bush, and what do you think, there lay a fiddle and a blowpipe, all ready, just as if they had been ordered. He gave them to the servant, saying, "No one will ever be able to deny any request that you might make."

"What more could my heart desire?" said the servant to himself, and went merrily on his way.

Soon afterward he met a Jew with a long goatee, who was standing listening to a bird singing high up in the top of a tree.

"One of God's own miracles," he shouted, "that such a small creature should have such a fearfully loud voice. If only it were mine! If only someone would sprinkle some salt on its tail!"

"If that is all you want," said the servant, "then the bird shall soon be down here." He took aim, hit it precisely, and the bird fell down into a thorn hedge.

"Rogue," he said to the Jew, "Go and fetch the bird out for yourself."

"My goodness," said the Jew, "don't call me a rogue, sir, but I will be the dog and get the bird out for myself. After all, you're the one who shot it."

Then he lay down on the ground and began crawling into the thicket. When he was in the middle of the thorns, the good servant could not resist the temptation to pick up his fiddle and begin to play.

The Jew's legs immediately began to move, and he jumped up. The more the servant fiddled the better went the dance. However, the thorns ripped apart the Jew's shabby coat, combed his beard, and pricked and pinched him all over his body.

"My goodness," cried the Jew, "what do I want with your fiddling? Stop playing, sir. I don't want to dance."

But the servant did not listen to him, and thought, "You have fleeced people often enough, and now the thorn hedge shall do the same to you." He began to play all over again, so that the Jew had to jump even higher, leaving scraps from his coat hanging on the thorns.

"Oh, woe is me!" cried the Jew. "I will give the gentleman anything he asks, if only he quits fiddling, even a purse filled with gold."

"If you are so generous," said the servant, "then I will stop my music. But I must praise the singular way that you dance to it." Then he took his purse he went on his way.

The Jew stood there quietly watching the servant until he was far off and out of sight, and then he screamed out with all his might, "You miserable musician, you beer-house fiddler! Wait until I catch you alone. I will chase you until you wear the soles off your shoes. You ragamuffin, just put a groschen in your mouth, so that you will be worth six hellers." He continued to curse as fast as he could speak. As soon as he had thus refreshed himself a little, and caught his breath again, he ran into the town to the judge.

"Judge, sir," he said, "Oh, woe is me! See how a godless man has robbed me and abused me on the open road. A stone on the ground would feel sorry for me. My clothes are ripped into shreds. My body is pricked and scratched to pieces. And what little I owned has been taken away with my purse -- genuine ducats, each piece more beautiful than the others. For God's sake, let the man be thrown into prison."

The judge asked, "Was it a soldier who cut you up like that with his saber?"

"God forbid," said the Jew. "He didn't have a naked dagger, but rather a blowpipe hanging from his back, and a fiddle from his neck. The scoundrel can easily be recognized."

The judge sent his people out after him. They found the good servant, who had been walking along quite slowly. And they found the purse with the money on him as well.

When he was brought before the judge he said, "I did not touch the Jew, nor take his money. He offered it to me freely, so that I would stop fiddling, because he could not stand my music."

"God forbid!" cried the Jew. "He is reaching for lies like flies on the wall."

The judge did not believe his story, and said, "That is a poor excuse. No Jew would do that." And because he had committed robbery on the open road, the good servant was sentenced to the gallows.

As he was being led away, the Jew screamed after him, "You good-for-nothing. You dog of a musician. Now you will receive your well earned reward."

The servant walked quietly up the ladder with the hangman, but on the last rung he turned around and said to the judge, "Grant me just one request before I die."

"Yes," said the judge, "if you do not ask for your life."

"I do not ask for life," answered the servant, "but let me play my fiddle one last time."

The Jew cried out miserably, "For God's sake, do not allow it! Do not allow it!"

But the judge said, "Why should I not grant him this short pleasure? It has been promised to him, and he shall have it." In any event, he could not have refused because of the gift that had been bestowed on the servant.

The Jew cried, "Oh, woe is me! Tie me up. Tie me up tightly."

The good servant took his fiddle from his neck, and made ready. As he played the first stroke, they all began to quiver and shake: the judge, the clerks, and the court officials. The rope fell out of the hand of the one who was going to tie up the Jew.

At the second stroke they all lifted their legs. The hangman released the good servant and made ready to dance.

At the third stroke everyone jumped up and began to dance. The judge and the Jew were out in front and were the best at jumping. Soon everyone who had gathered in the marketplace out of curiosity was dancing with them, old and young, fat and thin, all together with each other. Even the dogs that had run along with the crowd stood up on their hind legs and hopped along as well. The longer he played, the higher the dancers jumped, until they were knocking their heads together and crying out terribly.

Finally the judge, quite out of breath, shouted, "I will give you your life, but just stop fiddling."

The good servant listened to this, then took his fiddle, hung it around his neck again, and climbed down the ladder. He went up to the Jew, who was lying upon the ground gasping for air, and said, "You rogue, now confess where you got the money, or I will take my fiddle off my neck and begin to play again."

"I stole it. I stole it," he cried. "But you have honestly earned it."

With that the judge had the Jew led to the gallows and hanged as a thief.

* Source: Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, [Der Jude im Dorn](http://gutenberg.aol.de/grimm/maerchen/jude_im.htm), *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children's and Household Tales -- Grimms' Fairy Tales), final edition (1857), no. 110.
* Translated by [D. L. Ashliman](http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/ashliman.html). © 2001.
* The Grimms' knew at least four versions of this tale:
  1. Albrecht Dietrich, *Historia von einem Bawrenknecht* (1618, originally written as a rhymed theater piece in 1599).
  2. Jakob Ayrer, *Fritz Dölla mit seiner gewünschten Geigen* (1620).
  3. An oral version from Hessen.
  4. An oral version from the von Haxthausen family.
* This tale was included in the first edition of the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen,* volume 2, (1815), no. 24. It underwent only modest stylistic modifications between the first and the final editions.
* Aarne-Thompson type 592, *Dancing in Thorns.* In the oldest versions of this story, the hero's scapegoat and victim is a Christian monk, and not a Jew.
* Translator's notes:
  1. A heller is a small copper coin. The word can be translated with *farthing* or *penny*.
  2. The hero's hunting weapon is identified in German as a *Vogelrohr*, literally a *bird-pipe*. Most translators render this into English with *gun*, although I prefer the more primitive and less lethal weapon, the*blowpipe*.

## Related links

* [Anti-Semitic Legends](http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/antisemitic.html).
* The Grimm Brothers' [Children's and Household Tales](http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimmtales.html) (Grimms' Fairy Tales).
* The [Grimm Brothers' Home Page](http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm.html).
* D. L. Ashliman's [**folktexts**](http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/folktexts.html), a library of folktales, folklore, fairy tales, and mythology.

Revised February 5, 2001.

**The Poor Man and the Rich Man  
  
by The Brothers Grimm**

translated by Margaret Taylor (1884)

In olden times, when the Lord himself still used to walk about on this earth amongst men, it once happened that he was tired and overtaken by the darkness before he could reach an inn. Now there stood on the road before him two houses facing each other; the one large and beautiful, the other small and poor. The large one belonged to a rich man, and the small one to a poor man.

Then the Lord thought, "I shall be no burden to the rich man, I will stay the night with him." When the rich man heard some one knocking at his door, he opened the window and asked the stranger what he wanted. The Lord answered, "I only ask for a night's lodging."

Then the rich man looked at the traveler from head to foot, and as the Lord was wearing common clothes, and did not look like one who had much money in his pocket, he shook his head, and said, "No, I cannot take you in, my rooms are full of herbs and seeds; and if I were to lodge everyone who knocked at my door, I might very soon go begging myself. Go somewhere else for a lodging," and with this he shut down the window and left the Lord standing there.

So the Lord turned his back on the rich man, and went across to the small house and knocked. He had hardly done so when the poor man opened the little door and bade the traveler come in. "Pass the night with me, it is already dark," said he; "you cannot go any further to-night." This pleased the Lord, and he went in. The poor man's wife shook hands with him, and welcomed him, and said he was to make himself at home and put up with what they had got; they had not much to offer him, but what they had they would give him with all their hearts. Then she put the potatoes on the fire, and while they were boiling, she milked the goat, that they might have a little milk with them. When the cloth was laid, the Lord sat down with the man and his wife, and he enjoyed their coarse food, for there were happy faces at the table. When they had had supper and it was bed-time, the woman called her husband apart and said, "Hark you, dear husband, let us make up a bed of straw for ourselves to-night, and then the poor traveler can sleep in our bed and have a good rest, for he has been walking the whole day through, and that makes one weary." "With all my heart," he answered, "I will go and offer it to him;" and he went to the stranger and invited him, if he had no objection, to sleep in their bed and rest his limbs properly. But the Lord was unwilling to take their bed from the two old folks; however, they would not be satisfied, until at length he did it and lay down in their bed, while they themselves lay on some straw on the ground.

Next morning they got up before daybreak, and made as good a breakfast as they could for the guest. When the sun shone in through the little window, and the Lord had got up, he again ate with them, and then prepared to set out on his journey.

But as he was standing at the door he turned round and said, "As you are so kind and good, you may wish three things for yourselves and I will grant them." Then the man said, "What else should I wish for but eternal happiness, and that we two, as long as we live, may be healthy and have every day our daily bread; for the third wish, I do not know what to have." And the Lord said to him, "Will you wish for a new house instead of this old one?" "Oh, yes," said the man; "if I can have that, too, I should like it very much." And the Lord fulfilled his wish, and changed their old house into a new one, again gave them his blessing, and went on.

The sun was high when the rich man got up and leaned out of his window and saw, on the opposite side of the way, a new clean-looking house with red tiles and bright windows where the old hut used to be. He was very much astonished, and called his wife and said to her, "Tell me, what can have happened? Last night there was a miserable little hut standing there, and to-day there is a beautiful new house. Run over and see how that has come to pass."

So his wife went and asked the poor man, and he said to her, "Yesterday evening a traveler came here and asked for a night's lodging, and this morning when he took leave of us he granted us three wishes -- eternal happiness, health during this life and our daily bread as well, and besides this, a beautiful new house instead of our old hut."

When the rich man's wife heard this, she ran back in haste and told her husband how it had happened. The man said, "I could tear myself to pieces! If I had but known that! That traveler came to our house too, and wanted to sleep here, and I sent him away." "Quick!" said his wife, "get on your horse. You can still catch the man up, and then you must ask to have three wishes granted to you."

The rich man followed the good counsel and galloped away on his horse, and soon came up with the Lord. He spoke to him softly and pleasantly, and begged him not to take it amiss that he had not let him in directly; he was looking for the front-door key, and in the meantime the stranger had gone away, if he returned the same way he must come and stay with him. "Yes," said the Lord; "if I ever come back again, I will do so." Then the rich man asked if might not wish for three things too, as his neighbor had done? "Yes," said the Lord, he might, but it would not be to his advantage, and he had better not wish for anything; but the rich man thought that he could easily ask for something which would add to his happiness, if he only knew that it would be granted. So the Lord said to him, "Ride home, then, and three wishes which you shall form, shall be fulfilled."

The rich man had now gained what he wanted, so he rode home, and began to consider what he should wish for. As he was thus thinking he let the bridle fall, and the horse began to caper about, so that he was continually disturbed in his meditations, and could not collect his thoughts at all. He patted its neck, and said, "Gently, Lisa," but the horse only began new tricks. Then at last he was angry, and cried quite impatiently, "I wish your neck was broken!" Directly he had said the words, down the horse fell on the ground, and there it lay dead and never moved again. And thus was his first wish fulfilled. As he was miserly by nature, he did not like to leave the harness lying there; so he cut it off, and put it on his back; and now he had to go on foot. "I have still two wishes left," said he, and comforted himself with that thought.

And now as he was walking slowly through the sand, and the sun was burning hot at noon-day, he grew quite hot-tempered and angry. The saddle hurt his back, and he had not yet any idea what to wish for. "If I were to wish for all the riches and treasures in the world," said he to himself, "I should still to think of all kinds of other things later on, I know that, beforehand. But I will manage so that there is nothing at all left me to wish for afterwards." Then he sighed and said, "Ah, if I were but that Bavarian peasant, who likewise had three wishes granted to him, and knew quite well what to do, and in the first place wished for a great deal of beer, and in the second for as much beer as he was able to drink, and in the third for a barrel of beer into the bargain."

Many a time he thought he had found it, but then it seemed to him to be, after all, too little. Then it came into his mind, what an easy life his wife had, for she stayed at home in a cool room and enjoyed herself. This really did vex him, and before he was aware, he said, "I just wish she was sitting there on this saddle, and could not get off it, instead of my having to drag it along on my back." And as the last word was spoken, the saddle disappeared from his back, and he saw that his second wish had been fulfilled. Then he really did feel warm. He began to run and wanted to be quite alone in his own room at home, to think of something really large for his last wish. But when he arrived there and opened the parlour-door, he saw his wife sitting in the middle of the room on the saddle, crying and complaining, and quite unable to get off it. So he said, "Do bear it, and I will wish for all the riches on earth for thee, only stay where thou art." She, however, called him a fool, and said, "What good will all the riches on earth do me, if I am to sit on this saddle? Thou hast wished me on it, so thou must help me off." So whether he would or not, he was forced to let his third wish be that she should be quit of the saddle, and able to get off it, and immediately the wish was fulfilled. So he got nothing by it but vexation, trouble, abuse, and the loss of his horse; but the poor people lived happily, quietly, and piously until their happy death.

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