A king had three sons whom he loved equally well, and he did not know which of them to appoint as king following his own death.

When the time came for him to die he called them to his bed and said, "Dear children, I have thought of something that I will reveal to you. The one of you is the laziest shall become king after me."

The oldest one said, "Father, then the kingdom belongs to me, for I am so lazy that whenever I lie down to sleep, and a drop falls into my eyes, I will not even close them so that I can fall asleep."

The second one said, "Father, the kingdom belongs to me, for I am so lazy that when I am sitting by the fire warming myself, I would rather let my heels burn up than to pull my legs back."

The third one said, "Father, the kingdom is mine, for I am so lazy that if I were going to be hanged and already had the rope around my neck, and someone put into my hand a sharp knife with which to cut the rope, I would let myself be hanged rather than to lift my hand up to the rope."

When the father heard this he said,"You have taken it the farthest and shall be king."