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 How the Three Itching Peasants Won the Gold Pieces

One day the ^{Peasants -- three -- itching} padışah became bored with all of the entertainment provided for him. He called the ^{Vezir -- grand} Grand Vezir ^{Vezir} and said to him, "Today I want you to provide me with some different sort of entertainment."

After some thought, the Grand Vezir went to a peasant's hut where ^{brothers -- three} there lived three brothers, each with an itch in a different place. The oldest had a dripping nose that itched and which he continually wiped with his sleeve. The second had a mangy scalp which he scratched. And the youngest had a similar infection on his back which he scratched. The Grand Vezir said to the three brothers, "If you will come before the padışah and stand for a whole hour without scratching your itches, I shall give each of you a piece of gold." After a brief consultation among themselves, the peasants agreed to this offer.

The Grand Vezir went to the padışah and informed him of the trial ^{trial -- of endurance} of endurance to which he was going to put the three brothers with the ^{against scratching} itch, and the padışah was curious to witness this spectacle. When the three brothers appeared, they were at ease at first. Then as the desire to scratch became greater, they started to squirm in discomfort. The hour was almost up when the three could bear it no longer, but they refused to lose the gold by relieving themselves in such a way that they could be accused of scratching.

The eldest brother pointed out to sea and said, "Look! There is a fine new boat." As he said this, he pointed in the direction of the boat, running his sleeve past his nose as he did so.

"Yes," said the second brother, "and they are playing a drum on board," and he imitated the drummer by beating on his head with his fists.

nose
 hand
 back

Nose -- dripping
 -- itcha
 Scalp -- mangy
 Back -- itche
 from infection

trial -- of endurance
 against scratching
 itch

The youngest then said, "Yes, and see how fast they are rowing it!" working his arms back and forth and hunching up his back as if he were pulling an oar.

The padişah laughed at the cleverness of the three brothers and told the Grand Vezir that he had enjoyed their performance. The Grand Vezir gave them each a piece of gold.