

Story #655 (1976, Tape #17)

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#655 #655 #655
 The Lame Man, the Bald Man and the Blind Man Three itching parasites
 friends - - three

Once there were three friends. One was blind, one was crippled, and the third was bald. They went everywhere together, but they soon realized that whenever they were together in public, the blind man would rub his eyes, the bald man would pat his head, and the crippled man would unconsciously kick his lame leg. They decided to stop their embarrassing behavior, for when they were at a coffeehouse everyone turned around to stare at them. They agreed among themselves to punish whichever of them misbehaved in public.

Soon after this, they all went out to sit at the coffeehouse as they usually did. After they had been there for a while, the bald-headed man's head started itching, the blind man's eyes started smarting, and the crippled man's lame leg started bothering him. Each wondered what he could do to relieve his discomfort.

The bald man was the shrewdest of the three. He had a felt hat on his head. He finally thought of a way to scratch his head, and he said, "My father had a mill which continually turned this way and this way and this way." And he twisted the hat on his head in demonstration of the action of the mill.

The blind man realized that his bald friend had just taken care

Story #655

of himself, and he wondered how he could do the same. Finally he said, "My father was an expert at casting a line. He would cast the line with his right hand, and then again with his left hand." And while he demonstrated his father's casting skill, he rubbed his smarting eyes with his sleeves and felt much better.

The crippled fellow all of a sudden caught on to his friends' trickery. He wondered how to take care of his stiff leg, and finally deciding to take the straight path, he shouted, "I swear to God you are both lying!"

In indignation, he gesticulated and unbent his leg three times, thus relieving its stiffness. They all laughed at each other and decided to lift the punishment for misbehaving in public, and they all went on their way happily.