



STORY: LAZY BONES, A TALE FROM LAOS

Retold by Dianne de Las Casas

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There was once a man so lazy that everyone called him Lazybones. His mornings, afternoons, and nights were spent lazing around. No one had ever seen him work a day in his entire life.

Lazybones lived under a wild fig tree. He was so lazy that he wouldn't even reach up to grab a fig. He would simply open his mouth and wait for the figs to fall in. The townspeople would say,

Sitting around all day is just plain crazy
Oh, Lazybones why are you so lazy?

He would answer, "While you are living a life of hard work, I am living a life of leisure" and he would continue to laze around.

One day, a mighty wind blew some of his wild figs into the river. The figs floated downriver. The king's daughter was sitting on the river bank when she spotted the floating figs. She reached in and grabbed a few.

The princess ate one of the figs and exclaimed, "These are the most delicious fruit I have ever tasted! I will marry the man to whom this fruit belongs!"

She showed the King the figs and told him her plans. The King ordered everyone with figs to come to the castle so that his daughter could taste the fruit.

Each time someone presented the princess with figs, she would shake her head no and say,

Though these figs are good to eat
The figs I want are perfect and sweet

Meanwhile, Lazybones continued his daily routine. He laid under his fig tree, opened his mouth and waited for the figs to fall in.

When the princess turned all the figs away, the King was determined to find out who owned the figs his daughter loved so much. He asked everyone he knew if there were figs in the land that had not been sampled by the princess.

Someone said, “Your Highness, the figs your daughter seeks belong to Lazybones. He doesn’t work at all. He lives under his fig tree, opens his mouth, and waits for the figs to fall in. He was too lazy to make the journey to the castle.”

When the princess heard this, she decided to visit Lazybones herself. She found his village and asked the people about him. They answered

Sitting around all day is just plain crazy
Oh, Lazybones he is so very lazy!

They told her where his fig tree was and sure enough, he was lying under the tree with his mouth wide open waiting for the figs to fall in.

The princess reached up and grabbed some figs. When she tasted them, she exclaimed

These figs are delicious and sweet
These are the figs I want to eat!

She told Lazybones of her search and her desire to marry him. Since he was too lazy to go to church to get married, Lazybones and the princess were married right under the fig tree.

When the king found out the princess married someone so lazy, he banished her from the kingdom. Though the princess was sad that her father was so upset, she lived in contentment with Lazybones under the big fig tree. They lay under the tree, opened their mouths and waited for the figs to fall in.

They were happy for a time but suddenly, tragedy struck. The princess had grown used to eating the figs and they gave her good health. When the fig tree stopped bearing fruit, the princess became very sick.

Lazybones realized that he loved his wife very much and would do anything to nurse her back to health. He got up and began working. He planted new fig trees. The trees began growing and the land prospered.

Once the princess had her fill of the delicious figs, she recovered. Once again, Lazybones and his wife were happy.

Word reached the King of Lazybones’ efforts to nurse his daughter back to health. He welcomed her and her new husband back into the kingdom.

From that time on, Lazybones lived in the lap of luxury. And though he could live a life of leisure in the castle, he chose to work for the things that mattered most. He continued to plant fig trees and harvest its delicious fruit for his wife and the people around him.

Sitting around all day is just plain crazy
Oh, Lazybones, he works and is no longer lazy!

