

Lean Lisa

Lean Lisa was of a very different way of thinking from lazy Harry and fat Trina, who never let anything disturb their peace. She scoured everything with ashes, from morning till evening, and burdened her husband, Long Laurence, with so much work that he had heavier weights to carry than an ass with three sacks. It was, however, all to no purpose, they had nothing and came to nothing. One night as she lay in bed, and could hardly move one limb for weariness, she still did not allow her thoughts to go to sleep. She thrust her elbows into her husband's side, and said, "Listen, Lenz, to what I have been thinking: if I were to find one florin and one was given to me, I would borrow another to put to them, and thou too shouldst give me another, and then as soon as I had got the four florins together, I would buy a young cow." This pleased the husband right well. "It is true," said he, "that I do not know where I am to get the florin which thou wantest as a gift from me; but, if thou canst get the money together, and canst buy a cow with it, thou wilt do well to carry out thy project. I shall be glad," he added, "if the cow has a calf, and then I shall often get a drink of milk to refresh me." - "The milk is not for thee," said the woman, "we must let the calf suck that it may become big and fat, and we may be able to sell it well." - "Certainly," replied the man, "but still we will take a little milk; that will do no harm." - "Who has taught thee to manage cows?" said the woman; "Whether it does harm or not, I will not allow it, and even if thou wert to stand on thy head for it, thou shouldst not have a drop of the milk! Dost thou think, because there is no satisfying thee, Long Laurence, that thou art to eat up what I earn with so much difficulty?" - "Wife," said the man, "be quiet, or I will give thee a blow on thy mouth!" - "What!" cried she, "thou threatenest me, thou glutton, thou rascal, thou lazy Harry!" She was just laying hold of his hair, but long Laurence got up, seized both Lean Lisa's withered arms in one hand, and with the other he pressed down her head into the pillow, let her scold, and held her until she fell asleep for very weariness. Whether she continued to wrangle when she awoke next morning, or whether she went out to look for the florin which she wanted to find, that I know not.

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