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The Laborer And His Master

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Once upon a time there was a laborer who said to his master:

"It is time to plant the fields."

"Very well," said his master. "The part which grows above the ground shall be mine and you shall have in payment for your labor the part which grows below the ground."

"Agreed," said the laborer.

He planted the fields with potatoes. His master had nothing but the tops outside the earth. The laborer harvested many baskets of potatoes that year and sold them for a goodly sum. The master was angry because of this.

"Next harvest time," said he, "we'll see about things! You shall give me what grows below the ground and keep for yourself what grows above."

"Agreed," said the laborer. "That is perfectly fair to me."

The laborer planted the fields with wheat. His master had nothing but the roots, while he harvested a rich crop of wheat which he sold for much money.

"I'll settle with you," said his master.

The laborer was frightened.

"Don't be afraid," said his wife. "When your master comes let me talk to him."

The woman gashed her face and hands with the pruning knife.

The master came to the door and she opened it.



"Where is your husband?" he asked.

"He is sharpening his nails," said she. "See what ugly scratches I already have upon my hands and face."

The master went away without punishing the laborer.

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