Moroz Ivanovich — Version 2

Once upon a time there lived a Handywoman and a Lazy Girl, and with them a nanny. The Handywoman got up early and immediately set to work. And the Lazy Girl meanwhile lay in her little bed, tossing from side to side.

Once something bad happened to the Handywoman: she accidentally dropped a bucket into the well. The strict nanny said, "You drowned the little bucket yourself, you fetch it yourself!"

The Handywoman went back to the well, grabbed the rope, and descended to the very bottom. She looks — before her is a stove, and from the stove a little pie peeks out and says:
— Whoever takes me will go with me.

The Handywoman took it out and put it in her bosom. She goes further, looks — in the garden is a tree, and on the tree golden apples are talking to one another:
— Whoever shakes us from the tree will take us for themselves.

The Handywoman shook down apples into her apron.

She goes further, looks — old man Moroz Ivanovich is sitting on an icy bench.
— Hello, — he says, — Handywoman! Thank you, maiden, for bringing me the pie — I haven't eaten anything hot in a long time.

Together they breakfasted on the pie and juicy apples, and then the old man said:
— I know you came for the little bucket; I will give it to you, only you must serve me for three days.

And so they went into the house, and that house was all made of ice, and the walls were decorated with shining snowflakes, and on the bed instead of a featherbed lay snow.

The Handywoman set about fluffing the snow so the old man would sleep softer, and her hands, poor thing, grew stiff, but she rubbed them with snow, and her hands recovered. And Moroz Ivanovich lifted the featherbed, and under it was green grass. The Handywoman was surprised: why doesn't the old man let the grass into God's light, and he answered:
— The grass has not yet gained strength. When spring comes, the featherbed will melt, the grass will ear, the grain will appear, the peasant will grind it at the mill, and there will be flour, and from the flour you will bake bread.

Then the old man lay down to sleep on the fluffed featherbed, and the Handywoman set about bustling around the household. So they lived three days, and when she had to leave, Moroz Ivanovich said:
— Thank you, you comforted the old man. Here is your little bucket, I have poured silver five-kopeck pieces into it, and also a diamond — to fasten a kerchief.

The Handywoman thanked Moroz Ivanovich, went home, and there told what had happened to her. The nanny says to the Lazy Girl:
— See what people get for work! Descend into the well, find the old man and serve him.

The Lazy Girl went to the well and splashed straight to the bottom. She saw the stove with the pie, the tree with juicy apples — she took nothing, she was too lazy. She came to Moroz Ivanovich with empty hands:
— I want to serve and get paid for the work!

— You speak wisely. Fluff my featherbed for me, clean up the house, and prepare the food.

The Lazy Girl thought, "I will not tire myself out," — and did not do what Moroz Ivanovich told her.

The old man himself prepared the food, cleaned the house, and fed the Lazy Girl. They lived three days, and the maiden asked for a reward.
— What work did you do? — the old man was surprised. — You owe me payment, because I served you. But never mind, as is the work, so is the reward.

Moroz Ivanovich gave the Lazy Girl in one hand a huge silver ingot, and in the other — a great-big diamond.

The Lazy Girl did not even thank the old man, she ran home joyful. She came and boasts.
— Look, — she says, — I am no match for my sister, I did not earn a handful of five-kopeck pieces...

She had not finished speaking when the silver ingot and the diamond melted and flowed onto the floor...

And you, children, think and guess what here is true, what is false, what is said in jest, and what as a lesson...