

Good Little Henry IV: The Vintage

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French

Intermediate
3 min read

Henry began to walk rapidly and perceived with great delight that every step brought him nearer to the summit of the mountain. In three hours he had walked two-thirds of the way. But suddenly he found himself arrested by a very high wall which he had not perceived before. He walked around it, and found, after three days' diligent advance, that this wall surrounded the entire mountain and that there was no door, not the smallest opening by which he could enter.

Henry seated himself on the ground, to reflect upon his situation. He resolved to wait patiently—he sat there forty-five days. At the end of this time he said:

“I will not go back if I have to wait here a hundred years.”

He had scarcely uttered these words when a part of the wall crumbled away with a terrible noise and he saw in the opening a giant, brandishing an enormous cudgel.

“You have then a great desire to pass here, my boy? What are you seeking beyond my wall?”

“I am seeking the plant of life, Master Giant, to cure my poor mother who is dying. If it is in your power and you will allow me to pass this wall, I will do anything for you that you may command.”

“Is it so? Well, listen! Your countenance pleases me. I am one of the genii of this mountain. I will allow you to pass this wall if you will fill my wine-cellar. Here are all my vines. Gather the grapes, crush them, put the juice

in the casks and arrange them well in my wine-cellar. You will find all the implements necessary at the foot of this wall. When it is done, call me.”

The Giant disappeared, closing the wall behind him. Henry looked around him and as far as he could see, the vines of the Giant were growing luxuriously.

“Well, well,” said Henry to himself, “I cut all the wheat of the little old man—I can surely also gather the grapes of the big Giant. It will not take me so long and it will not be as difficult to make wine of these grapes as to make bread of the wheat.”

Henry took off his coat, picked up a pruning-knife which he saw at his feet and began to cut the grapes and throw them into the vats. It took him thirty days to gather this crop. When all was finished, he crushed the grapes, poured the juice into the casks and ranged them in the cellar, which they completely filled. He was ninety days making the wine.

When the wine was ready and everything in the cellar in complete order, Henry called the Giant who immediately appeared, examined the casks, tasted the wine, then turned towards Henry and said:

“You are a brave little man and I wish to pay you for your trouble. It shall not be said that you worked gratis for the Giant of the mountain.”

He drew a thistle from his pocket, gave it to Henry and said:

“After your return home, whenever you desire anything, smell this thistle.”

Henry did not think the Giant very generous but he received the thistle with an amiable smile.

Then the Giant whistled so loudly that the mountain trembled and the wall and Giant disappeared entirely and Henry was enabled to continue his journey.

Note: The story continues in Good Little Henry Part V: The Chase

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