

Good Little Henry Part III:

The Harvest

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French

Intermediate

3 min read

Henry walked a long, long time but he walked in vain for he saw that he was no farther from the foot of the mountain and no nearer to the summit than he had been when he crossed the river. Any other child would have retraced his steps but the brave little Henry would not allow himself to be discouraged. Notwithstanding his extreme fatigue he walked on twenty-one days without seeming to make any advance. At the end of this time he was no more discouraged than at the close of the first day.

“If I am obliged to walk a hundred years,” he said aloud, “I will go on till I reach the summit.”

“You have then a great desire to arrive there, little boy?” said an old man, looking at him maliciously and standing just in his path. “What are you seeking at the top of this mountain?”

“The plant of life, my good sir, to save the life of my dear mother who is about to die.”

The little old man shook his head, rested his little pointed chin on the top of his gold-headed cane and after having a long time regarded Henry, he said:

“Your sweet and fresh face pleases me, my boy. I am one of the genii of this mountain. I will allow you to

advance on condition that you will gather all my wheat, that you will beat it out, make it into flour and then into bread. When you have gathered, beaten, ground and cooked it, then call me. You will find all the necessary implements in the ditch near you. The fields of wheat are before you and cover the mountain.”

The old man disappeared and Henry gazed in terror at the immense fields of wheat which were spread out before him. But he soon mastered this feeling of discouragement—took off his vest, seized a scythe and commenced cutting the wheat diligently. This occupied him a hundred and ninety-five days and nights.

When the wheat was all cut, Henry commenced to beat it with a flail which he found at hand. This occupied him sixty days.

When the grain was all beaten out he began to grind it in a mill which rose up suddenly near him. This occupied him seventy days.

When the wheat was all ground he began to knead it and to cook it. He kneaded and cooked for a hundred and twenty days.

As the bread was cooked he arranged it properly on shelves, like books in a library.

When all was finished Henry was transported with joy and called the genius of the mountain who appeared immediately and counted four hundred and sixty-eight thousand three hundred and twenty-nine new loaves of bread. He bit and ate a little end off of two or three, drew near to Henry, tapped him on the cheek and said:

“You are a good boy and I wish to pay you for your work.”

He drew from his pocket a little wooden box which he gave to Henry and said, maliciously:

“When you return home, open this box and you will find in it the most delicious tobacco you have ever seen.”

Now Henry had never used tobacco and the present of the little genius seemed to him very useless but he was too polite to let this be seen and he thanked the old man as if satisfied.

The old one smiled, then burst out laughing and disappeared.

Note: The story continues in Good Little Henry Part IV: The Vintage

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