



Good Little Henry Part V: The Chase

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French

Intermediate
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Henry was within a half-hour's walk of the summit of the mountain when he reached a pit so wide that he could not possibly jump to the other side and so deep that it seemed bottomless. Henry did not lose courage, however. He followed the borders of the pit till he found himself where he started from and knew that this yawning pit surrounded the mountain.

“Alas! what shall I do?” said poor Henry; “I scarcely overcome one obstacle when another more difficult seems to rise up before me. How shall I ever pass this pit?”

The poor child felt for the first time that his eyes were filled with tears. He looked around for some means of passing over but saw no possible chance and seated himself sadly on the brink of the precipice. Suddenly he heard a terrible growl. He turned and saw within ten steps of him an enormous Wolf gazing at him with flaming eyes.

“What are you seeking in my kingdom?” said the Wolf, in a threatening voice.

“Master Wolf, I am seeking the plant of life which alone can save my dear mother who is about to die. If you will assist me to cross this pit, I will be your devoted servant and will obey any command you may give me.”

“Well, my boy, if you will catch all the game which is in my forests, birds and beasts, and make them up into pies and nice roasts, by the faith of the genius of the mountain, I will pass you over to the other side. You will find near this tree all the instruments necessary to catch the game and to cook it. When your work is done, call me.”

Saying these words, he disappeared.

Henry took courage. He lifted a bow and arrow which he saw on the ground, and began to shoot at the partridges, woodcocks, pheasants and game of all kinds which abounded there. But, alas! he did not understand it and killed nothing.

During eight days he was shooting right and left in vain and was at last wearied and despairing, when he saw near him the Crow whose life he had saved in the commencement of his journey.

“You rescued me from mortal danger,” said the Crow, “and I told you I should see you again. I have come to redeem my promise. If you do not fulfil your promise to the Wolf, he will change you into some terrible wild beast. Follow me. I am going a-hunting and you have only to gather the game and cook it.”

Saying these words, the Crow flew above the trees of the forest and with his beak and his claws killed all the game to be found. In fact, during one hundred and fifty days he caught one million eight hundred and sixty thousand seven hundred and twenty-six animals and birds, squirrels, moor-cocks, pheasants, and quails. As the Crow killed them, Henry plucked the feathers, skinned them, cut them up and cooked them in roasts or pies. When all was cooked he arranged them neatly and then the Crow said to him:

“Adieu, Henry. There remains one obstacle yet to overcome but in that difficulty I cannot aid you. But do not be discouraged. The good fairies protect filial love.”

Before Henry had time to thank the Crow, he had disappeared. He then called the Wolf and said to him:

“Master Wolf, here is all the game of your forest. I have prepared it as you ordered and now will you assist me to pass this precipice?”

The Wolf examined a pheasant, crunched a roast squirrel and a pie, licked his lips and said to Henry:

“You are a brave and good boy. I will pay you for your trouble. It shall not be said that you have worked for the Wolf of the mountain without receiving your reward.”

Saying these words, he gave Henry a staff which he cut in the forest and said to him:

“When you have gathered the plant of life and wish yourself transported to any part of the world, mount the stick and it will be your horse.”

Henry was on the point of throwing this useless stick into the woods but he wished to be polite, and receiving it smilingly, he thanked the Wolf cordially.

“Get on my back, Henry,” said the Wolf.

Henry sprang upon the Wolf's back and he made a bound so prodigious that they landed immediately on the other side of the precipice.

Henry dismounted, thanked the Wolf and walked on vigorously.

Note: The story continues in Good Little Henry Part VI: The Fishing

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