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A Story of the Pennsylvania Coal Mines

WRITTEN BY HOMER GREENE
EDITED BY JENNY PHILLIPS

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TEXT HAS BEEN MODIFIED AND UPDATED WITH MODERN-DAY GRAMMAR AND SPELLING

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## Chapter 1

#### LOST IN THE MINE



Many years ago there was no busier mine in the Pennsylvania coal fields than the Dryden Slope Mine. Two hundred and thirty men and boys went by the slope into it every morning and came out from it every night. They were simple and unlearned, these men and boys, rugged and rude, rough and reckless at times, but they were also manly, heroic, and kindhearted.

At the time this story opens, workers at other mines in the area were on strike, and they wanted the Dryden miners to strike as well. But the Dryden miners had no cause of complaint against their employers; they earned good wages and were content. When persuasion did not work on the Dryden miners, they were threatened, waylaid, beaten, and sometimes killed.

So the men in the Dryden Mine yielded, and soon, down the chambers and along the headings, toward the foot of the slope, came little groups leaving the mine, with dinner pails and tools, discussing earnestly, often bitterly, the situation of their forced strike.

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Fifteen or twenty departing miners were holding an especially animated conversation. They were all walking in single file along the route by which the mine cars went.

Where the route crossed from the airway to the heading, a door had been placed, to be opened whenever the cars approached and to be shut as soon as they had passed by.

That door was attended by a boy.

To this point the party had now come, and one by one they filed through the opening, while Bennie, the door boy, stood holding back the door to let them pass.

"Ho, Jack, take the door boy with you!" shouted someone in the rear.

The great, broad-shouldered, rough-bearded man who led the procession turned back to where Bennie, apparently lost in astonishment at this unusual occurrence, still stood with his hand on the door.

"Come along, lad!" he said. "Come along! You'll have some play time now."

"I can't leave the door, sir," answered Bennie. "The cars will be coming soon."

"You need not mind the cars. Come along with you, I say!"

"But I can't go until Tom comes, anyway, you know."

The man came a step closer. He had the frame of a giant. The others who passed by were like children beside him. Then one of the men who worked in the mine, and who knew Bennie, came through the doorway, the last in the group, and said, "Don't hurt the boy; let him alone. His brother will take him out; he always does."

All this time Bennie stood quite still, with his hand on the door, never turning his head.

It was a strange thing for a boy to stand motionless like that and to look neither to the right nor the left while an excited group of men passed by, one of whom had stopped and approached him as if he meant him harm. It roused the curiosity of "Jack the Giant," as the miners called him, and plucking his lamp from his cap, he flashed the light of it up into Bennie's face.

The boy did not stir; no muscle of his face moved; even his eyes remained open and fixed.

"Why, lad! Lad! What's the matter with you?" There was tenderness in the giant's voice as he spoke, and tenderness in his bearded face as Bennie answered, "Don't you know? I'm blind." Lost in the Mine 5

"Blind! And working in the mines?"

"Oh, a body doesn't have to see to attend the door, you know. All I have to do is to open it when I hear the cars coming and to shut it when they get by."

"That's true, but you did not get here alone. Who helped you?"

Bennie's face lighted up with pleasure, as he answered, "Oh, that's Tom! He helps me. I couldn't get along without him; I couldn't do anything without Tom."

The man's interest and compassion had grown as the conversation lengthened, and he was charmed by the voice of the child. It had in it that touch of pathos that often lingers in the voices of the blind. He would hear more of it.

"Sit you, lad," he said. "Sit you, and tell me about Tom, and about yourself, and all you can remember."

Then they sat down on the rude bench together, with the roughly hewn pillar of coal at their backs, blind Bennie and Jack Rennie, the giant. While one told the story of his blindness and his blessings and his hopes, the other listened with tender earnestness, almost with tears.

Bennie told first about Tom, his brother, who was fourteen years old, two years older than himself. Tom was so good to him, and Tom could see as well as anybody. "Why," Bennie exclaimed, "Tom can see everything!"

Then Bennie told about his blindness—how he had been blind ever since he could remember. But there was a doctor, he said, who came up once from Philadelphia to visit Major Dryden before the major died, and he had chanced to see Tom and Bennie up by the mines, and the doctor had looked at Bennie's eyes and said he thought, if the boy could go to Philadelphia and have treatment, that sight might be restored.

Tom asked how much it would cost, and the doctor said, "Oh, maybe a hundred dollars," and then someone came and called the doctor away, and they had never seen him since.

But Tom resolved that Bennie should go to Philadelphia, if ever he could save money enough to send him.

Tom was a driver boy in Dryden Slope, and his meager earnings went mostly to buy food and clothing for the little family. But he began now to lay aside for Bennie the dollar or two that he had been accustomed to spend each month for himself.

Bennie knew about it, of course, and rejoiced greatly at the prospect in

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store for him, but he expressed much discontent because he, himself, could not help to obtain the fund which was to cure him. Then Tom, with the aid of the kindhearted mine superintendent, found employment for his brother as a door boy in Dryden Slope, and Bennie was happy. It wasn't absolutely necessary that a door boy should see. If he had good hearing, he could get along very well.

So every morning Bennie went down the slope with Tom and climbed into an empty mine car, and Tom's mule drew them, rattling along the heading until they reached, almost a mile from the foot of the slope, the doorway where Bennie stayed.

Then Tom went on, with the empty cars, up to the new tier of chambers and brought the loaded cars back. Every day he passed through Bennie's doorway on three round trips in the morning, and three round trips in the afternoon; and every day, when the noon hour came, he stopped on the down trip and sat with Bennie on the bench by the door, and both ate from one pail the dinner prepared for them by their mother.

When quitting time came, and Tom went down to the foot of the slope with his last trip for the day, Bennie climbed to the top of a load and rode out, or else, with his hands on the last car of the trip, walked safely along behind.

"And Tom and me together have almost twenty dollars saved now!" said the boy exultingly. "And we've only got to get eighty dollars more, and then I can go and buy back the sight into my eyes; and then Tom and me, we're going to work together all our lives. Tom, he's going to get a chamber and be a miner, and I'm going to be Tom's laborer until I learn how to mine, and then we're going to take a contract together and hire laborers and get rich, and then—why, then Mommie won't have to work any more!"

It was like a glimpse of a better world to hear this boy talk. The most favored child of wealth that ever reveled seeing in the sunlight has had no hope, no courage, no sublimity of faith, that could compare with those of this blind son of poverty and toil. He had his high ambition, and that was to work. He had his sweet hope to be fulfilled, and that was to see. He had his earthly shrine, and that was where his mother sat. And he had his hero of heroes, and that was Tom.

There was no quality of human goodness or bravery or excellence of any kind that he did not ascribe to Tom. He would sooner have disbelieved all of Lost in the Mine 7

his four remaining senses than have believed that Tom would say an unkind word to Mommie or to him or be guilty of a mean act towards anyone.

Bennie's faith in Tom was fully justified. No nineteenth century boy could have been more manly, no knight of old could have been more true and tender than was Tom to the two beings whom he loved best upon all the earth.

"But the father, laddie," said Jack still charmed and curious; "where's the father?"

"Dead," answered Bennie. "He came from the old country first, and then he sent for Mommie and us, and when we got here, he was dead."

"Ah, but that was awful sad for the mother! Took with the fever, was he?"

"No; killed in the mine. Top coal fell and struck him. That's the way they found him. We didn't see him, you know. That was two weeks before me and Tom and Mommie got here. I wasn't but four years old then, but I can remember how Mommie cried. She didn't have much time to cry, though, because she had to work so hard. Mommie's always had to work so hard," added Bennie, reflectively.

The man began to move nervously on the bench. It was apparent that some strong emotion was taking hold of him. He lifted the lamp from his cap again and held it up close to Bennie's face.

"Killed, said you—in the mine—top coal fell?"

"Yes, and struck him on the head. They said he didn't ever know what killed him."

The brawny hand trembled so that the flame from the spout of the little lamp went up in tiny waves.

"Where—where did it happen—in what place—in what mine?"

"Up in Carbondale. No. 6 shaft, I think it was. Yes, No. 6."

Bennie spoke somewhat hesitatingly. His quick ear had caught the change in the man's voice, and he did not know what it could mean.

"His name, lad! Give me the father's name!"

The giant's huge hand dropped upon Bennie's little one and held it in a painful grasp. The boy started to his feet in fear.

"You won't hurt me, sir! Please don't hurt me; I can't see!"

"Not for the world, lad; not for the whole world. But I must have the father's name. Tell me the father's name, quick!"

"Thomas Taylor, sir," said Bennie, as he sank back, trembling, on the bench.

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The lamp dropped from Jack Rennie's hand and lay smoking at his feet. His huge frame seemed to have shrunk by at least a quarter of its size, and for many minutes he sat, silent and motionless, seeing as little of the objects around him as did the blind boy at his side.

At last he roused himself, picked up his lamp, and rose to his feet.

"Well, lad, Bennie, I must be going. Goodbye to you. Will the brother come for you?"

"Oh, yes!" answered Bennie, "Tom always stops for me. He hasn't come up from the foot yet, but he'll come."

The man turned away, then turned back again. "Where's the lamp?" he asked, "Have you no light?"

"No, I don't ever have any. It wouldn't be any good to me, you know."

Once more the man started down the heading but, after he had gone a short distance, a thought seemed to strike him, and he came back to where Bennie was still sitting.

"Lad, I thought to tell you; you shall go to the city with your eyes. I have money to send you, and you shall go. I—I—knew—your father, lad."

Before Bennie could express his surprise and gratitude, he felt a strong hand laid gently on his shoulder and a rough, bearded face pressed for a moment against his own, and then his strange visitor was gone.

Down the heading, the retreating footsteps echoed, their sound swallowed up at last in the distance, and up at Bennie's doorway, silence reigned.

For a long time the boy sat pondering the meaning of the strange man's words and conduct. But the more he thought about it, the less able was he to understand it. Perhaps Tom could explain it, though. Yes, he would tell Tom about it. Then it occurred to him that it was long past time for Tom to come up from the foot with his last trip for the day. It was strange, too, that the men should all go out together that way; he didn't understand it. But if Tom would only come . . .

Bennie rose and walked down the heading a little way; then he turned and went up through the door and along the airway; then he came back to his bench again and sat down.

He was sure Tom would come. Tom had never disappointed him yet, and he knew he would not disappoint him for the world if he could help it. He knew, too, that it was long after quitting time, and there hadn't been a sound that he could hear in the mine for an hour, though he had listened carefully.

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After a while he began to grow nervous; the stillness became oppressive; he could not endure it. He determined to try to find the way out by himself. He had walked to the foot of the slope alone once, the day Tom was sick, and he thought he could do it again.

So he made sure that his door was tightly closed, then he took his dinner-pail and started bravely down the heading, striking the rails of the mine car track on each side with his cane to guide him as he went along.

Sometimes he would stop and listen for a moment, if, perchance, he might hear Tom coming to meet him or, possibly, some belated laborer going out from another part of the mine. Then, hearing nothing, he would trudge on again.

After a long time spent thus, he thought he must be near the foot of the slope; he knew he had walked far enough to be there. He was tired, too, and sat down on the rail to rest. But he did not sit there long; he could not bear the silence—it was too depressing—and after a very little while, he arose and walked on. The caps in the track grew higher. Once he stumbled over one of them and fell, striking his side on the rail. He was in much pain for a few minutes; then he recovered and went on more carefully, lifting his feet high with every step, and reaching ahead with his cane. But his progress was very slow.

Then there came upon him the sensation of being in a strange place. It did not seem like the heading along which he went to and from his daily work. He reached out with his cane upon each side and touched nothing. Surely, there was no place in the heading so wide as that.

But he kept on.

By and by he became aware that he was going down a steep incline. The echoes of his footsteps had a hollow sound, as though he were in some wide, open space, and his cane struck one, two, three, props in succession. Then he knew he was somewhere in a chamber, and knew, too, that he was lost.

He sat down, feeling weak and faint and tried to think. He remembered that, at a point in the heading about two-thirds of the way to the foot, a passage branched off to the right, crossed under the slope, and ran out into the southern part of the mine where he had never been. He thought he must have turned into this cross heading and followed it, and if he had, it would be hard indeed to tell where he now was. He did not know whether to go on or to turn back.

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Perhaps it would be better, after all, to sit still until help should come, though it might be hours, or even days, before anyone would find him.

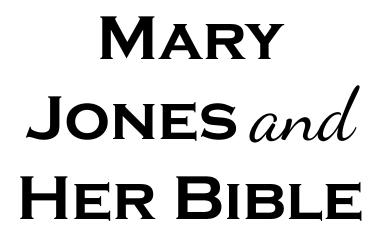
Then came a new thought. What would Tom do? Tom would not know where he had gone; he would never think of looking for him away off here. He would go up the heading to the door, and not finding him there, would think that his brother had already gone home. But when he knew that Bennie was not at home, he would surely come back to the mine to search for him; he would come down the slope; maybe he was, at that very moment, at the foot; maybe Tom would hear him if he should call, "Tom! Oh, Tom!"

The loudest thunderburst could not have been more deafening to the frightened child than the sound of his own voice as it rang out through the solemn stillness of the mine and was hurled back to his ears by the solid masses of rock and coal that closed in around him.

A thousand echoes went rattling down the wide chambers and along the narrow galleries and sent back their ghosts to play upon the nervous fancy of the frightened child. He would not have shouted like that again if his life had depended on it.

Then silence fell upon him; silence like a pall—oppressive, mysterious and awful silence, in which he could almost hear the beating of his own heart. He could not endure that. He grasped his cane again and started on, searching for a path, stumbling over caps, falling sometimes, but on and on, though never so slowly—on and on until, faint and exhausted, he sank down upon the damp floor of the mine, with his face in his hands, and wept, in silent agony, like the lost child that he was.

Lost, indeed, with those miles and miles of black galleries opening and winding and crossing all around him, and he, lying prostrate and powerless, alone in the midst of that desolation.



The Story of a Welsh Girl's Faith

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### Chapter 1

# At the Foot of the Mountain

O Shepherd of all the flock of God, Watch over Thy lambs and feed them; For Thou alone, through the rugged paths, In the way of life can lead them.

It would be hard to find a lovelier, more picturesque spot than the valley where nestles the little village of Llanfihangel. Above the village towers the majestic mountain with its dark crags, its rocky precipices, and its steep ascents; while stretching away in the distance to the westward, lie the bold shore and glistening waters of the bay, where the white waves come rolling in and dash into foam.

And now as, in thought, we stand upon the lower slopes of the valley and look across the little village of Llanfihangel, we find ourselves wondering what kind of people have occupied those rude grey cottages for the last century. What were their simple histories, their habits, their toils and struggles, their sorrows and pleasures?

To those then who share our interest in this place and events connected with them, we would tell the simple tale which gives Llanfihangel a place among the justly celebrated and honored spots of the country of Wales.

In the year 1792, over two hundred years ago, the night shadows had fallen around the little village of Llanfihangel. The season was late autumn, and a cold wind was moaning and sighing among the trees, stripping them of their changed garments, lately so green and gay, whirling them round in eddies, and laying them in shivering heaps along the narrow valley.

Wan and watery, the moon, encompassed by peaked masses of cloud, had risen and now cast a faint light across a line of jutting crags, bringing into relief their sharp, ragged edges against the dark background of rolling vapor.

In pleasant contrast to the night with its threatening gloom, a warm light shone through the windows of one of the cottages that formed the village. The light was caused by the blaze of a fire of dried driftwood on the



stone hearth, while in a rude wooden stand a candle burned, throwing its somewhat uncertain brightness upon a loom where sat a weaver at work. A bench, two or three stools, a cupboard, and a kitchen table—these, with the loom, were all the furniture.

Standing in the center of the room was a middle-aged woman.

"I am sorry you cannot go, Jacob," said she. "You'll be missed at the meeting. But the same Lord Almighty, who gives us the meetings for the good of our souls, sent you that wheezing of the chest, for the trying of your body and spirit, and we must needs have patience until He sees fit to take it away again."

"Yes, wife, and I'm thankful that I needn't sit idle but can still work at my trade," replied Jacob Jones. "There's many who are much worse off. But what are you waiting for, Molly? You'll be late for the exercises."

"I'm waiting for that child, and she's gone for the lantern," responded Mary Jones, whom her husband generally called Molly, to distinguish her from their daughter who was also Mary.

Jacob smiled. "The lantern! Yes," he said, "you'll need it this dark night. 'Twas a good thought of yours, wife, to let Mary take it as you do, for the child wouldn't be allowed to attend those meetings otherwise. And she does seem so eager after everything of the kind."

"Yes, she knows already pretty nearly all that you and I can teach her of the Bible, as we learned it, doesn't she, Jacob? She's only eight now, but I remember when she was but a wee child; she would sit on your knee for hours on a Sunday and listen to the stories of Abraham and Joseph and David and Daniel. There never was a girl like our Mary for Bible stories, or any stories, for the matter of that, bless her! But here she is! You've been a long time getting that lantern, child, and we must hurry, or we shall be late."

Little Mary raised a pair of bright dark eyes to her mother's face.

"Yes, mother," she replied, "I was long because I ran to borrow neighbor Williams' lantern. The latch of ours won't hold, and there's such a wind tonight that I knew we should have the light blown out."

"There's a moon," said Mrs. Jones, "and I could have done without a lantern."

"Yes, but then you know, Mother, I should have had to stay at home," responded Mary, "and I do so love to go."

"You needn't tell me that, child," laughed Molly. "Then come along, Mary; goodbye, Jacob."

"Goodbye, Father dear! I wish you could come too!" cried Mary, running back to give Jacob a last kiss.

"Go your way, child, and mind you remember all you can to tell old father when you come home."

Then the cottage door opened, and Mary and her mother sallied out into the cold, windy night.

The moon had disappeared now behind a thick, dark cloud, and little Mary's borrowed lantern was very acceptable. Carefully she held it so that the light fell upon the way they had to traverse—a way which would have been difficult if not dangerous without the lantern's friendly aid.

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," said Mrs. Jones, as she took her little daughter's hand in hers.

"Yes, Mother, I was just thinking of that," replied the child. "I wish I knew ever so many verses like this one."

"How glad I should be if your father and I could teach you more, but it has been years since we learned, and we've got no Bible, and our memories are not as good as they used to be," sighed the mother.

A walk of some length, and over a rough road, brought them at last to the little meetinghouse where the church members belonging to the Methodist body were in the habit of attending.

They were rather late, and the exercises had begun, but kind farmer Evans made room for them on his bench and found for Mrs. Jones the place in the psalm-book from which the little company had been singing.

Mary was the only child there, but her manner was so reverent that no one looking at her could have felt that she was out of place. As Farmer Evans read from the Bible, Mary hung on the words, and her intelligent little face held an expression of joy.

"Why haven't we a Bible of our own, Mother?" she asked as they trotted homeward after the meeting.

"Because Bibles are scarce, child, and we're too poor to pay the price of one. A weaver's is an honest trade, Mary, but we do not get rich by it, and we think ourselves happy if we have clothes to cover us. Still, precious as the Word of God would be in our hands, more precious are its teachings and its truths in our hearts."

"I suppose you can wait, Mother, because you've waited so long that you're used to it," replied Mary, "but it's harder for me. Every time I hear

something read out of the Bible, I long to hear more, and when I learn to read, it will be harder still."

Mrs. Jones was about to answer when she stumbled over a stone and fell, though fortunately without hurting herself. Mary's thoughts were so full of what she had been saying that she had become careless in the management of the lantern, and her mother, not seeing the stone, had struck her foot against it.

"Ah, child! It's the present duties, after all, that we must look after most," said Molly as she got slowly up. "And even a fall may teach us a lesson, Mary. The very Word of God itself, which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, can't save us from many a tumble if we don't use it aright and let the light shine on our daily life, helping us in its smallest duties and cares. Remember this, my little Mary."

And little Mary did remember this, and her life afterwards proved that she had taken the lesson to heart—a simple lesson taught by a simple, unlearned handmaid of the Lord, but a lesson which the child treasured up in her very heart of hearts.



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## Chapter 1

# At Home in the Little Stone Hut

High up in the Bernese Oberland, quite a distance above the meadow-encircled hamlet of Kandergrund, stands a little lonely hut under the shadow of an old fir tree. Not far away, the wild brook rushes down from the wooded heights of rock. In times of heavy rains, it has carried away so many rocks and boulders that when the storms are ended, a ragged mass of stones is left through which flows a swift, clear stream of water. Therefore the little dwelling near by this brook is called the stone hut.

Here lived the honest day laborer Toni, who conducted himself well in every farmhouse where he went to work; for he was quiet and industrious, punctual at his tasks, and reliable in every way.

In his home he had a young wife and a little boy who was a joy to both of them. Near the hut in the little shed was the goat, the milk of which supplied food for the mother and child, while the father received his board through the week on the farms where he worked from morning until night. Only on Sunday was he at home with his wife and little Toni. The wife, Elsbeth, kept her little house in good order. It was narrow and tiny, but it always looked so clean and cheerful that everyone liked to come into the sunny room; and the father, Toni, was never so happy as when he was at home in the stone hut with his little boy on his knee.

For five years the family lived in harmony and undisturbed peace. Although they had no abundance and little worldly goods, they were happy and content. The husband earned enough, so they did not suffer want, and they desired nothing beyond their simple manner of life, for they loved each other and their greatest delight was little Toni.

The little boy grew strong and healthy, and with his merry ways delighted his father's heart when he was at home on Sundays and sweetened all his 112 Toni the Woodcarver

mother's work on the weekdays when his father was away until late in the evening.

Little Toni was now four years old and already knew how to be helpful in all sorts of small ways, in the house, the goat's shed, and also in the field behind the hut. From morning until night, he tripped happily behind his mother, for he was as content as the little birds up in the old fir tree.

When Saturday night came, the mother scrubbed and cleaned with doubled energy to finish early, for on that day the father was through with his work earlier than on other days, and she always went, with little Toni by the hand, part way to meet him. This was a great delight to the child. He now knew very well how one task followed another in the household. When his mother began to scrub, he jumped around in the room with delight and cried out again and again, "Now we are going for Father! Now we are going for Father!" until the moment came when his mother took him by the hand and started along.

Saturday evening had come again in the lovely month of May. Outdoors the birds in the trees were singing merrily up to the blue sky; indoors the mother was cleaning busily, in order to get out early into the golden evening; and meanwhile now outside, now in the house, little Toni was hopping around and shouting, "Now we are going for Father!"

It was not long before the work was finished. The mother put on her shawl, tied on her best apron, and stepped out of the house.

Toni jumped for joy and ran three times around his mother, then seized her hand and shouted once more, "Now we are going for Father!"

Then he skipped along beside his mother in the lovely, sunny evening. They wandered to the brook, over the wooden bridge that crosses it, and came to the narrow footpath winding up through the flower-laden meadows to the farm where the father worked.

The last rays of the setting sun fell across the meadows, and the sound of the evening bells came up from Kandergrund.

The mother stood still and folded her hands.

"Lay your hands together, Toni," she said.

The child obeyed.

"What must I pray, Mother?" he asked.

"Give us and all tired people a blessed Sunday! Amen!" said the mother devoutly.

Little Toni repeated the prayer. Suddenly he shouted, "Father is coming!" Down from the farm someone was running as fast as he could come.

"That is not Father," said his mother, and they both went towards the running man.

When they met, the man stood still and said, gasping, "Don't go any farther. Turn around, Elsbeth. I came straight to you, for something has happened."

"Oh!" cried the woman in the greatest anguish. "Has something happened to Toni?"

"Yes, he was with the woodcutters, and he was struck. They have brought him back. He is lying up at the farm. But don't go up there," he added, holding Elsbeth fast, for she wanted to start off as soon as she heard the news.

"Not go up?" she said quickly. "I must go to him. I must help him and see about bringing him home."

"You cannot help him, he is—he is already dead," said the messenger in an unsteady voice. Then he turned and ran back again, glad to have the message off his mind.

Elsbeth threw herself down on a stone by the way, unable to stand or to walk. She held her apron before her face and burst into weeping and sobbing, so that little Toni was distressed and frightened. He pressed close to his mother and began to cry, too.

It was already dark when Elsbeth finally came to herself and could think of her child. The little one was still sitting beside her on the ground, with both hands pressed to his eyes, and sobbing pitifully. His mother lifted him up.

"Come, Toni, we must go home. It is late," she said, taking him by the hand.

But he resisted.

"No, no, we must wait for Father!" he said, and pulled his mother back.

Again she could not keep back the tears. "Oh, Toni, Father will come no more," she said, stifling her sobs. "He is already enjoying the blessed Sunday we prayed for, for the weary. See, the dear Lord has taken him to Heaven. It is so beautiful there, he will prefer to stay there."

"Then we will go, too," replied Toni.

"Yes, yes, we shall go there, too," promised his mother. "But now we must

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first go home to the stone hut." And without a word, she went with the little one back to the silent cottage.

The proprietor of the Matten farm sent word to Elsbeth the following day that he would do everything necessary for her husband, and so she need not come until it was time for the service, for she would not recognize her husband. He sent her some money in order that she would not have too much care in the next few days, and promised to think of her later on.

Elsbeth did as he advised and remained at home until the bells in Kandergrund rang for the service. Then she went to accompany her husband to his resting place.

Sad and hard days came for Elsbeth. She missed her good, kind husband everywhere and felt quite lost without him. Besides, cares came now which she had known little about before, for her husband had had his good, daily work. But now she felt sometimes as if she would almost despair. She had nothing but her goat and the little potato field behind the cottage, and from these she had to feed and clothe herself and the little one, and besides furnish rent for the little house.

Elsbeth had only one consolation, but one that always supported her when pain and care oppressed her—she could pray, and although often in the midst of tears, still always with the firm belief that the dear Lord would hear her supplication.

When at night she had put little Toni in his tiny bed, she would kneel down beside him and repeat aloud the old hymn, which now came from the depths of her heart as never before:

Oh, God of Love, oh Father-heart, In whom my trust is founded, I know full well how good Thou art— E'en when by grief I am wounded.

Oh Lord, it surely can not be That Thou wilt let me languish In hopeless depths of misery, And live in tears of anguish.

Oh Lord, my soul yearns for thine aid In this dark vale of weeping; For thee I've waited, hoped and prayed Assured of thy safe keeping.

Lord let me bear whatever thy Love May send of grief or sorrow, Until Thou, in thy Heaven above, Make dawn a brighter morrow.

And in the midst of her urgent praying, the mother's tears flowed abundantly. And little Toni, deeply moved in his heart by his mother's weeping and earnest prayer, kept his hands folded and wept softly, too.

So the time passed. Elsbeth struggled along, and little Toni was able to help her in many ways, for he was now seven years old. He was his mother's only joy, and she was able to take delight in him, for he was obedient and willing to do everything she desired. He had always been so inseparable from his mother that he knew exactly how the tasks of the day had to be done, and he desired nothing but to help her whenever he could. If she was working in the little field, he squatted beside her, pulled out the weeds, and threw the stones across the path.

If his mother was taking the goat out of the shed so that she could nibble the grass around the hut, he went with her step by step, for his mother had told him he must watch the goat so that she would not run away.

If his mother was sitting in winter by her spinning wheel, he sat the whole time beside her, mending his winter shoes with strong strips of cloth, as she had taught him to do. He had no greater wish than to see his mother happy and contented. His greatest pleasure was, when Sunday came and she was resting from all work, to sit with her on the little wooden bench in front of the house and listen as she told him about his father, and talk with her about all kinds of things.

But now the time had come for Toni to go to school. It was very hard for him to leave his mother and remain away from her so much. The long way down to Kandergrund and up again took so much time that Toni was hardly ever with his mother any more through the day, but only in the evening. Indeed he always came home so quickly that she could hardly believe it possible, for he looked forward with pleasure all day long to getting home again. He lost no time with his schoolmates, but ran immediately away from

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them as soon as school was over. He was not accustomed to the ways of the other boys, since he had been constantly alone with his quietly working mother and used to performing definite tasks continually without any noise.

So it was altogether strange to him, and he took no pleasure in it when the boys coming out of the schoolhouse, set up a great screaming, one running after another, trying to see which was the stronger, and throwing one another on the ground, or wrestling so that their caps were thrown far away and their jackets half torn off.

The wrestlers would often call to him, "Come and play!" And when he ran away from them, they would call after him, "You are a coward." But this made little difference to him; he didn't hear it long, for he ran with all his might in order to be at home again with his mother.

Now a new interest for him arose in the school. He had seen beautiful animals drawn on white sheets, which the children of the upper classes copied. He quickly tried to draw them with his pencil, too; and at home, he continued drawing the animals again and again as long as he had a bit of paper. Then he cut out the animals and tried to make them stand on the table, but this he could not do. Then suddenly the thought came to him that if they were made of wood, they could stand.

With his knife he quickly began to cut around on a little piece of wood until there was a body and four legs. But the wood was not large enough for the neck and the head, so he had to take another piece and calculate from the beginning how high it must be and where the head must be placed. So Toni cut away with much perseverance until he succeeded in making something like a goat and could show it with great satisfaction to his mother. She was much delighted at his skill, and said, "You are surely going to be a wood carver, and a very good one."

From that time on, Toni looked at every little piece of wood which came his way to see if it would be good for carving; and if so, he would quickly put it away in his pockets. He often brought home pockets full of these pieces, which he then collected like treasures into a pile and spent every free moment carving them.

Thus the years passed by. Although Elsbeth always had many cares, she experienced only joy in her Toni. He still clung to her with the same love, helped her in every way as well as he could, and spent his life beside her, entirely at his quiet occupation, in which he gradually acquired a quite

gratifying skill. Toni was never so content as when he was sitting in the little stone hut with his carving while his mother came in and out, happily employed, always saying a kindly word to him, until she finally sat down beside him at her spinning wheel.





## Rudi

Written By Johanna Spyri

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Edited by Jennifer D. Lerud and Jenny Phillips
First published in 1906

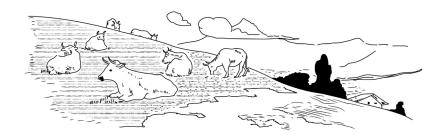
Text has been modified and updated with modern-day grammar, spelling, and usage

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## Chapter 1 Without a Friend



The traveler who ascends Mt. Seelis from the rear will presently find himself coming out upon a spot where a green meadow, fresh and vivid, is spread out upon the mountain side. The place is so inviting that one feels tempted to join the peacefully grazing cows and fall to eating the soft green grass with them. The clean, well-fed cattle wander about with pleasant musical accompaniment; for each cow wears a bell, so that one may tell by the sound whether any of them are straying too far out toward the edge, where the precipice is hidden by bushes and where a single misstep would be fatal. There is a company of boys, to be sure, to watch the cows, but the bells are also necessary, and their tinkling is so pleasant to hear that it would be a pity not to have them.

Little wooden houses dot the mountain side, and here and there a turbulent stream comes tumbling down the slope. Not one of the cottages stands on level ground; it seems as though they had somehow been thrown against the mountain and had stuck there, for it would be hard to conceive of their being built on this steep slope. From the highway below you might think them all equally neat and cheery, with their open galleries and little wooden stairways, but when you came nearer to them you would notice that they differed very much in character.

The two first ones were not at all alike. The distance between them was not very great, yet they stood quite apart, for the largest stream of the 144 Rudi

neighborhood, Clear Brook, as it is called, rushed down between them. In the first cottage all the little windows were kept tightly closed even through the finest summer days, and no fresh air was ever let in except through the broken windowpanes, and that was little enough, for the holes had been pasted over with paper to keep out the winter's cold. The steps of the outside stairway were in many places broken away, and the gallery was in such a ruinous state that it seemed as though the many little children crawling and stumbling about on it must surely break their arms or legs. But they all were sound enough in body though very dirty; their faces were covered with grime and their hair had never been touched by a comb. Four of these little urchins scrambled about here through the day, and at evening they were joined by four older ones,—three sturdy boys and a girl,—who were at work during the day. These, too, were none too clean, but they looked a little better than the younger ones, for they could at least wash themselves.

The little house across the stream had quite a different air. Even before you reached the steps, everything looked so clean and tidy that you thought the very ground must be different from that across the stream. The steps always looked as though they had just been scrubbed, and on the gallery there were three pots of blooming pinks that wafted fragrance through the windows all summer long. One of the bright little windows stood open to let in the fresh mountain air, and within the room a woman might be seen, still strong and active in spite of the snowy white hair under her neat black cap. She was often at work mending a man's shirt that was stout and coarse in material but was always washed with great care.

The woman herself looked so trim and neat in her simple dress that one fancied she had never in her life touched anything unclean. It was Frau Vincenze, mother of the young herdsman Franz Martin, he of the smiling face and strong arm. Franz Martin lived in his little hut on the mountain all summer making cheese and returned to his mother's cottage only in the late fall, to spend the winter with her and make butter in the lower dairy hut near by.

As there was no bridge across the wild stream, the two cottages were quite separated, and there were other people much farther away whom Frau Vincenze knew better than these neighbors right across the brook; for she seldom looked over at them,—the sight was not agreeable to her. She would shake her head disapprovingly when she saw the black faces and

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dirty rags on the children, while the stream of fresh, clean water ran so near their door. She preferred, when the twilight rest hour came, to enjoy her red carnations on the gallery, or to look down over the green slope that stretched from her cottage to the valley below.

The neglected children across the stream belonged to "Poor Grass Joe," as he was called, who was usually employed away from home in haying, or chopping wood, or carrying burdens up the mountain. The wife had much to do at home, to be sure, but she seemed to take it for granted that so many children could not possibly be kept in order, and that in time, when the children grew older, things would mend of their own accord. So she let everything go as it would, and in the fresh, pure air the children remained healthy and were happy enough scrambling around on the steps and on the ground.

In the summer time the four older ones were out all day herding cows; for here in the lower pasture the whole herd of cows was not left to graze under one or two boys, as on the high Alps, but each farmer had to hire his own herd boy to look after his cows. This made jolly times for the boys and girls, who spent the long days together playing pranks and making merry in the broad green fields. Sometimes Joe's children were hired for potato weeding farther down the valley, or for other light field work. Thus they earned their living through the summer and brought home many a penny besides, which their mother could turn to good account; for there were always the four little mouths to be fed and clothes to be got for all the children. However simple these clothes might be, each child must have at least a little shirt, and the older ones one other garment besides. The family was too poor to possess even a cow, though there was scarcely a farmer in the neighborhood who did not own one, however small his piece of land might be.

Poor Grass Joe had got his name from the fact that the spears of grass on his land were so scarce that they would not support so much as a cow. He had only a goat and a potato field. With these small resources the wife had to struggle through the summer and provide for the four little ones, and sometimes, when work was scarce, for one or two of the older ones also. The father occasionally came home in the winter, but he brought very little to his family, for his house and land were so heavily mortgaged that he was never out of debt throughout the whole year. Whenever he had earned a little money, some one whom he owed would come and take it all away.

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So the wife had a hard time to get along,—all the more so because she had no order in her house-keeping and was not skillful in any kind of work. She would often go out and stand on the tumbledown gallery, where the boards were lying loose and ready to drop off, and instead of taking a hammer and fastening them down would look across the stream at the neat little cottage with the bright windows, and would say fretfully, "Yes, it's all very well for her to clean and scrub,—she has nothing else to do; but with me it's quite different."

Then she would turn back angrily into the close, dingy room and vent her anger on the first person who crossed her path. This usually happened to be a boy of ten or eleven years, who was not her own child, but who had lived in her house ever since he was a baby. This little fellow, known only by the name of "Stupid Rudi," was so lean and gaunt looking that one would have taken him to be scarcely eight years old. His timid, shrinking manner made it difficult to tell what kind of a looking boy he really was, for he never took his eyes from the ground when anyone spoke to him.

Rudi had never known a mother; she had died when he was hardly two years old, and shortly afterward his father had met with an accident when returning from the mountain one evening. He had been out in the fields, and seeking to reach home by a short cut, had lost his footing and fallen over a precipice. The fall lamed him, and after that he was not fit for any other work but braiding mats, which he sold in the big hotel on Mt. Seelis. Little Rudi never saw his father otherwise than sitting on a low stool with a straw mat on his knees. "Lame Rudolph" was the name the man went by. Now he had been dead six years. After his wife's death he had rented a little corner in Joe's house for himself and boy to sleep in, and the little fellow had remained there ever since. The few pennies paid by the community for Rudi's support were very acceptable to Joe's wife, and the extra space in his bedroom, after the father's death, was eagerly seized for two of her own boys, who scarcely had sleeping room for some time.

Rudi had been by nature a shy, quiet little fellow. The father, after the loss of his wife and the added misfortune of being crippled, lost all spirit; little as he had been given to talking before his misfortune, he was even more silent afterward.

So little Rudi would sit beside his father for whole days without hearing a word spoken, and did not himself learn to speak for a long time. After Without a Friend 147

his father died and he belonged altogether to Joe's household, he hardly ever spoke at all. He was scolded and pushed about by everybody, but he never thought of resisting; it was not in his nature to fight. The children did what they pleased to him, and besides their abuse he had to bear the woman's scoldings, especially when she was in a bad temper about the neat little house across the stream. But Rudi did not rebel, for he had the feeling that the whole world was against him, so what good would it do? With all this the boy in time grew so shy that it seemed as though he hardly noticed what was going on about him, and he usually gave no answer when any one spoke to him. He seemed, in fact, to be always looking for some hole that he might crawl into, where he would never be found again.

So it had come about that the older children, Jopp, Hans, Uli, and the girl Lisi, often said to him, "What a stupid Rudi you are!" and the four little ones began saying it as soon as they could talk. As Rudi never tried to deny it, all the people in time assumed that it must be so, and he was known throughout the neighborhood simply as "Stupid Rudi." And it really seemed as though the boy could not attend to anything properly as the other children did. If he was sent along with the other boys to herd cows, he would immediately hunt up a hedge or a bush and hide behind it. There he would sit trembling with fear, for he could hear the other boys hunting him and calling to him to come and join their game. The games always ended with a great deal of thumping and thrashing, of which Rudi invariably got the worst, because he would not defend himself, and, in fact, could not defend himself against the many stronger boys. So he crept away and hid as quickly as he could; meanwhile his cows wandered where they pleased and grazed on the neighbors' fields. This was sure to make trouble, and all agreed that Rudi was too stupid even to herd cows, and no one would engage him any more. In the field work there was the same trouble. When the boys were hired to weed potatoes they thought it great fun to pelt each other with bunches of potato blossoms,—it made the time pass more quickly,—and of course each one paid back generously what he got. Rudi alone gave back nothing, but looked about anxiously in all directions to see who had hit him. That was exactly what amused the other boys; and so, amid shouts and laughter, he was pelted from all sides,—on his head, his back, or wherever the balls might strike. But while the others had time to work in the intervals, Rudi did nothing but dodge and hide behind the

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potato bushes. So at this work he was a failure, too, and young and old agreed that Rudi was too stupid for any kind of work, and that Rudi would never amount to anything. As he could earn nothing and would never amount to anything, he was treated accordingly by Joe's wife. Her own four little ones had hardly enough to eat, and so it usually happened that for Rudi there was nothing at all and he was told, "You can find something; you are old enough."

How he really existed no one knew, not even Joe's wife; yet he had always managed somehow. He never begged; he would not do that; but many a good woman would hand out a piece of bread or a potato to the poor, starved little fellow as he went stealing by her door, not venturing to look up, much less to ask for anything. He had never in his life had enough to eat, but still that was not so hard for him as the persecution and derision he had to take from the other boys. As he grew older he became more and more sensitive to their ridicule, and his main thought at all times was to escape notice as much as possible. As he was never seen to take any part with the other children in work or play, people took it for granted that he was incapable of doing what the others did, and they declared that he was growing more stupid from day to day.



# Short Stories BY LEO TOLSTOY

Original illustrations by Blake E. Davis

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## A JUST JUDGE

A n Algerian king named Bauakas wanted to find out whether or not it was true, as he had been told, that in one of his cities lived a just judge who could instantly discern the truth, and from whom no rogue was ever able to conceal himself. Bauakas exchanged clothes with a merchant and went on horseback to the city where the judge lived.

At the entrance to the city a cripple approached the king and begged alms of him. Bauakas gave him money and was about to continue on his way, but the cripple clung to his clothing.

"What do you wish?" asked the king. "Haven't I given you money?"

"You gave me alms," said the cripple, "now grant me one favor. Let me ride with you as far as the city square, otherwise the horses and camels may trample me."

Bauakas sat the cripple behind him on the horse and took him as far as the city square. There he halted his horse, but the cripple refused to dismount.

"We have arrived at the square, why don't you get off?" asked Bauakas.

"Why should I?" the beggar replied. "This horse belongs to me. If you are unwilling to return it, we shall have to go to court."

Hearing their quarrel, people gathered around them shouting:

"Go to the judge! He will decide between you!"

Bauakas and the cripple went to the judge. There were others in court, and the judge called upon each one in turn. Before he came to Bauakas and the cripple he heard a scholar and a peasant. They had come to court over a woman: the peasant said she was his wife, and the scholar said she was his. The judge heard them both, remained silent for a moment, and then said:

"Leave the woman here with me, and come back tomorrow."

When they had gone, a butcher and an oil merchant came before the judge. The butcher was covered with blood, and the oil merchant with oil. In his hand the butcher held some money, and the oil merchant held onto the butcher's hand.



"I was buying oil from this man," the butcher said, "and when I took out my purse to pay him, he seized me by the hand and tried to take all my money away from me. That is why we have come to you-I holding onto my purse, and he holding onto my hand. But the money is mine, and he is a thief."

Then the oil merchant spoke. "That is not true," he said. "The butcher came to me to buy oil, and after I had poured him a full jug, he asked me to change a gold piece for him. When I took out my money and placed it on a bench, he seized it and tried to run off. I caught him by the hand, as you see, and brought him here to you."

The judge remained silent for a moment, then said: "Leave the money here with me, and come back tomorrow."

When his turn came, Bauakas told what had happened. The judge listened to him, and then asked the beggar to speak.

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"All that he said is untrue," said the beggar. "He was sitting on the ground, and as I rode through the city he asked me to let him ride with me. I sat him on my horse and took him where he wanted to go. But when we got there he refused to get off and said that the horse was his, which is not true."

The judge thought for a moment, then said, "Leave the horse here with me, and come back tomorrow."

The following day many people gathered in court to hear the judge's decisions.

First came the scholar and the peasant.

"Take your wife," the judge said to the scholar, "and the peasant shall be given fifty strokes of the lash."

The scholar took his wife, and the peasant was given his punishment. Then the judge called the butcher.

"The money is yours," he said to him. And pointing to the oil merchant he said: "Give him fifty strokes of the lash."

He next called Bauakas and the cripple.

"Would you be able to recognize your horse among twenty others?" he asked Bauakas.

"I would," he replied.

"And you?" he asked the cripple.

"I would," said the cripple.

"Come with me," the judge said to Bauakas.

They went to the stable. Bauakas instantly pointed out his horse among the twenty others. Then the judge called the cripple to the stable and told him to point out the horse. The cripple recognized the horse and pointed to it. The judge then returned to his seat.

"Take the horse, it is yours," he said to Bauakas. "Give the beggar fifty strokes of the lash."

When the judge left the court and went home, Bauakas followed him.

"What do you want?" asked the judge. "Are you not satisfied with my decision?"

"I am satisfied," said Bauakas. "But I should like to learn how you knew that the woman was the wife of the scholar, that the money belonged to the butcher, and that the horse was mine and not the beggar's."

"This is how I knew about the woman: in the morning I sent for her and said: 'Please fill my inkwell.' She took the inkwell, washed it quickly and deftly,

and filled it with ink; therefore it was work she was accustomed to. If she had been the wife of the peasant she would not have known how to do it. This showed me that the scholar was telling the truth.

"And this is how I knew about the money: I put it into a cup full of water, and in the morning I looked to see if any oil had risen to the surface. If the money had belonged to the oil merchant it would have been soiled by his oily hands. There was no oil on the water; therefore, the butcher was telling the truth.

"It was more difficult to find out about the horse. The cripple recognized it among twenty others, even as you did. However, I did not take you both to the stable to see which of you knew the horse, but to see which of you the horse knew. When you approached it, it turned its head and stretched its neck toward you; but when the cripple touched it, it laid back its ears and lifted one hoof. Therefore I knew that you were the horse's real master."

Then Bauakas said to the judge: "I am not a merchant, but King Bauakas, I came here in order to see if what is said of you is true. I see now that you are a wise judge. Ask whatever you wish of me, and you shall have it as reward."

"I need no reward," replied the judge. "I am content that my king has praised me."

### **THREE QUESTIONS**

It once occurred to a certain King, that if he always knew the right time to begin everything; if he knew who were the right people to listen to, and whom to avoid; and, above all, if he always knew what was the most important thing to do, he would never fail in anything he might undertake.

And this thought having occurred to him, he had it proclaimed throughout his kingdom that he would give a great reward to anyone who would teach him what was the right time for every action, and who were the most necessary people, and how he might know what was the most important thing to do.

Learned men came to the King, but they all answered his questions differently.

In reply to the first question, some said that to know the right time for every action, one must draw up in advance, a table of days, months and years, and must live strictly according to it. Only thus, said they, could everything be done at its proper time. Others declared that it was impossible to decide beforehand the right time for every action; but that, not letting oneself be absorbed in idle pastimes, one should always attend to all that was going on, and then do what was most needful. Others, again, said that however attentive the King might be to what was going on, it was impossible for one man to decide correctly the right time for every action, but that he should have a Council of wise men, who would help him to fix the proper time for everything.

But then again others said there were some things which could not wait to be laid before a Council, but about which one had at once to decide whether to undertake them or not. But in order to decide that, one must know beforehand what was going to happen. It is only magicians who know that; and, therefore, in order to know the right time for every action, one must consult magicians.

Equally various were the answers to the second question. Some said, the

people the King most needed were his councilors; others, the priests; others, the doctors; while some said the warriors were the most necessary.

To the third question, as to what was the most important occupation: some replied that the most important thing in the world was science. Others said it was skill in warfare; and others, again, that it was religious worship.

All the answers being different, the King agreed with none of them, and gave the reward to none. But still wishing to find the right answers to his questions, he decided to consult a hermit, widely renowned for his wisdom.

The hermit lived in a wood which he rarely left, and he received none but common folk. So the King put on simple clothes, and before reaching the hermit's cell dismounted from his horse, and, leaving his bodyguard behind, went on alone.

When the King approached, the hermit was digging the ground in front of his hut. Seeing the King, he greeted him and went on digging. The hermit was frail and weak, and each time he stuck his spade into the ground and turned a little earth, he breathed heavily.

The King asked, "I have come to you, wise hermit, to ask you to answer three questions: How can I learn to do the right thing at the right time? Who are the people I most need, and to whom should I, therefore, pay more attention than to the rest? And, what affairs are the most important, and need my first attention?"

The hermit listened to the King, but answered nothing. He just spat on his hand and recommenced digging.

"You are tired," said the King, "let me take the spade and work awhile for you."

"Thanks!" said the hermit, and, giving the spade to the King, he sat down on the ground.

When he had dug two beds, the King stopped and repeated his questions. The hermit again gave no answer, but rose, stretched out his hand for the spade, and said: "Now rest awhile and let me work a bit."

But the King did not give him the spade, and continued to dig. One hour passed, and another. The sun began to sink behind the trees, and the King at last stuck the spade into the ground, and said: "I came to you, wise man, for an answer to my questions. If you can give me none, tell me so, and I will return home."

"Here comes someone running," said the hermit, "let us see who it is."

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The King turned round, and saw a bearded man come running out of the wood. The man held his hands pressed against his stomach, and blood was flowing from under them. When he reached the King, he fell fainting on the ground moaning feebly. The King and the hermit unfastened the man's clothing. There was a large wound in his stomach. The King washed it as best he could, and bandaged it with his handkerchief and with a towel the hermit had. But the blood would not stop flowing, and the King again and again removed the bandage soaked with warm blood, and washed and rebandaged the wound. When at last the blood ceased flowing, the man revived and asked for something to drink. The King brought fresh water and gave it to him.

Meanwhile the sun had set, and it had become cool. So the King, with the hermit's help, carried the wounded man into the hut and laid him on the bed. Lying on the bed the man closed his eyes and was



quiet; but the King was so tired with his walk and with the work he had done, that he crouched down on the threshold, and also fell asleep—so soundly that he slept all through the short summer night. When he awoke in the morning, it was long before he could remember where he was, or who was the strange bearded man lying on the bed and gazing intently at him with shining eyes.

"Forgive me!" said the bearded man in a weak voice, when he saw that the King was awake and was looking at him.

"I do not know you, and have nothing to forgive you for," said the King.

"You do not know me, but I know you. I am that enemy of yours who swore to revenge himself on you, because you executed his brother and seized his property. I knew you had gone alone to see the hermit, and I resolved to kill you on your way back. But the day passed and you did not return. So I came out from my ambush to find you, and I came upon your bodyguard, and they recognized me, and wounded me. I escaped from them, but should have bled to death had you not dressed my wound. I wished to kill you, and you have saved my life. Now, if I live, and if you wish

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it, I will serve you as your most faithful slave, and will bid my sons do the same. Forgive me!"

The King was very glad to have made peace with his enemy so easily, and to have gained him for a friend, and he not only forgave him, but said he would send his servants and his own physician to attend him, and promised to restore his property.

Having taken leave of the wounded man, the King went out into the porch and looked around for the hermit. Before going away he wished once more to beg an answer to the questions he had put. The hermit was outside, on his knees, sowing seeds in the beds that had been dug the day before.

The King approached him, and said: "For the last time, I pray you to answer my questions, wise man."

"You have already been answered!" said the hermit, still crouching on his thin legs, and looking up at the King, who stood before him.

"How answered? What do you mean?" asked the King.

"Do you not see," replied the hermit. "If you had not pitied my weakness yesterday, and had not dug those beds for me, but had gone your way, that man would have attacked you, and you would have repented of not having stayed with me. So the most important time was when you were digging the beds; and I was the most important man; and to do me good was your most important business. Afterwards when that man ran to us, the most important time was when you were attending to him, for if you had not bound up his wounds he would have died without having made peace with you. So he was the most important man, and what you did for him was your most important business. Remember then: there is only one time that is important—now! It is the most important time because it is the only time when we have any power. The most necessary man is he with whom you are, for no man knows whether he will ever have dealings with anyone else: and the most important affair is, to do him good, because for that purpose alone was man sent into this life!"



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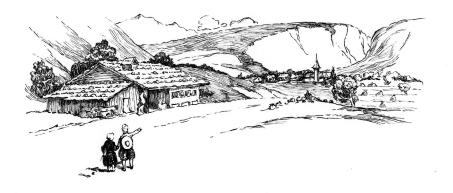
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# Chapter 1 **Moni is Happy**



It is a long, steep climb up to the Bath House at Fideris, after leaving the road leading up through the long valley of Prättigau. The horses pant so hard on their way up the mountain, that you prefer to dismount and clamber up on foot to the green summit.

After a long ascent, you come first to the village of Fideris, which lies on the pleasant green height; and from there you go on farther into the mountains until the lonely buildings connected with the Baths appear, surrounded on all sides by rocky mountains. The only trees that grow up there are firs, which cover the peaks and rocks, and it would all look very gloomy if the delicate mountain flowers with their brilliant coloring were not peeping forth everywhere through the low pasture grass.

One clear summer evening two ladies stepped out of the Bath House and went along the narrow footpath, which begins to mount not far from the house and soon becomes very steep as it ascends to the high, towering crags. At the first projection they stood still and looked around, for this was the very first time they had come to the Baths.

"It is not very lively up here, Aunt," said the younger, as she let her eyes wander around. "Nothing but rocks and fir woods, and then another mountain and more fir trees on it. If we are to stay here six weeks, I should like occasionally to see something more amusing."

"It would not be very amusing, at all events, if you should lose your diamond cross up here, Paula," replied the aunt, as she tied together the red velvet ribbon from which hung the sparkling cross. "This is the third time I have fastened the ribbon since we arrived. I don't know whether it is your fault or the ribbon's, but I do know that you would be very sorry if it were lost."

"No, no," exclaimed Paula, decidedly, "the cross must not be lost, on any account. It came from my grandmother and is my greatest treasure."

Paula herself seized the ribbon and tied two or three knots, one after the other, to make it hold fast. Suddenly she pricked up her ears: "Listen, listen, Aunt, now something really lively is coming."

A merry song sounded from far above them; then came a long, shrill yodel; then there was singing again.

The ladies looked upwards, but could see no living thing. The footpath was very crooked, often passing between tall bushes and then between projecting slopes, so that from below one could see up only a very short distance. But now there suddenly appeared something alive on the slopes above, in every place where the narrow path could be seen, and louder and nearer sounded the singing.

"See, see, Aunt, there! Here! See there! See there!" exclaimed Paula with great delight, and before the aunt was aware of it, three—four goats came bounding down, and more and more of them, each wearing around the neck a little bell so that the sound came from every direction. In the midst of the flock came the goat boy leaping along and singing his song to the very end.

Then he sounded a frightful yodel and immediately with his flock stood right before the ladies, for with his bare feet, he leaped as nimbly and lightly as his little goats.

"I wish you good evening!" he said as he looked gaily at the two ladies, and would have continued on his way, but the goat boy with the merry eyes pleased the ladies.

"Wait a minute," said Paula. "Are you the goat boy of Fideris? Do the goats belong to the village below?"

"Yes, to be sure!" was the reply.

"Do you go up there with them every day?"

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"Yes, surely."

"Is that so? And what is your name?"

"Moni is my name—"

"Will you sing me the song once more that you have just sung? We heard only one verse."

"It is too long," explained Moni. "It would be too late for the goats. They must go home." He straightened his weather-beaten cap, swung his rod in the air, and called to the goats which had already begun to nibble all around: "Home! Home!"

"You will sing to me some other time, Moni, won't you?" called Paula after him.

"Surely I will, and good night!" he called back, then trotted along with the goats; and in a short time, the whole flock stood still below, a few steps from the Bath House by the rear building, for here Moni had to leave the goats belonging to the house, the beautiful white one and the black one with the pretty little kid. Moni treated the last with great care, for it was a delicate little creature, and he loved it more than all the others. It was so attached to him that it ran after him continually all day long. He now led it very tenderly along and placed it in its shed. Then he said, "There, Mäggerli, now sleep well. Are you tired? It is really a long way up there, and you are still so little. Now lie right down, so, in the nice straw!"

After he had put Mäggerli to bed in this way, he hurried along with his flock, first up to the hill in front of the Baths, and then down the road to the village.

Here he took out his little horn and blew so vigorously into it that it resounded far down into the valley. From all the scattered houses the children now came running out. Each rushed upon his goat, which he knew a long way off; and from the houses nearby, one woman and then another seized her little goat by the cord or the horn, and in a short time the entire flock was separated, and each creature came to its own place. Finally Moni stood alone with the brown one, his own goat, and with her he now went to the little house on the side of the mountain, where his grandmother was waiting for him in the doorway.

"Has all gone well, Moni?" she asked pleasantly, and then led the brown goat to her shed and immediately began to milk her. The grandmother was still a robust woman and cared for everything herself in the house and in the shed, and everywhere kept order. Moni stood in the doorway of the

shed and watched his grandmother. When the milking was ended, she went into the little house and said, "Come, Moni, you must be hungry."

She had everything already prepared; Moni had only to sit down at the table. She seated herself next him, and although nothing stood on the table but the bowl of cornmeal mush cooked with the brown goat's milk, Moni hugely enjoyed his supper. Then he told his grandmother what he had done through the day; and as soon as the meal was ended, he went to bed, for in the early dawn he would have to start forth again with the flock.

In this way Moni had already spent two summers. He had been goat boy so long and become so accustomed to this life and grown up together with his little charges that he could think of nothing else. Moni had lived with his grandmother ever since he could remember. His mother had died when he was still very little; his father soon after went with others to military service in Naples, in order to earn something, as he said, for he thought he could get more pay there. His wife's mother was also poor, but she took her daughter's deserted baby boy, little Solomon, home at once and shared what she had with him. He brought a blessing to her cottage, and she had never suffered want.

Good old Elizabeth was very popular with everyone in the whole village, and when, two years before, another goat boy had to be appointed, Moni was chosen with one accord, since everyone was glad for the hard-working Elizabeth that now Moni would be able to earn something. The pious grandmother had never let Moni start away a single morning without reminding him:

"Moni, never forget how near you are up there to the dear Lord, and that He sees and hears everything, and you can hide nothing from His eyes. But never forget, either, that He is near to help you. So you have nothing to fear, and if you can call upon no human being up there, you have only to call to the dear Lord in your need, and He will hear you immediately and come to your aid."

So from the very first Moni went up, full of trust, to the lonely mountains and the highest crags, and never had the slightest fear of dread, for he always thought, "The higher up, the nearer I am to the dear Lord, and so all the safer whatever may happen."

So Moni had neither care nor trouble and could enjoy everything he did from morning till night. It was no wonder that he whistled and sang and yodeled continually, for he had to give vent to his great happiness.



a Play by Mary Rea Lewis

Edited by Jenny Phillips

Only slight modifications have been made in spelling and grammar

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#### Characters

DICK WHITTINGTON
APPLE-MAN
MAN
COOK
MR. FITZWARREN
ALICIA
CAPTAIN KENT
FIRST MAID
SECOND MAID
KING
QUEEN SERVANT
IOHN



#### **Dick Whittington**

Dick Whittington lived during the last part of the thirteenth and the first part of the fourteenth century. The story of his early years is lost in legend, but we do know that he lived and died and lies buried near the Tower of London; that he was four times Lord Mayor of London; was knighted by King Henry V; and was a very, very rich man, leaving a vast fortune to charities.

The story of Dick Whittington and his cat has always been a great favorite with children . . . the eternal success story of the poor boy who reached the top through his own goodness and efforts.

## ACT 1

# Scene 1

On the road to London—a clearing in the woods. Enter DICK, discouraged and tired.

DICK [seeing a log on the road side]: At Last! A place to rest. [Sits down wearily, rubs feet and ankles.] I must have traveled more than twenty miles today. My feet ache so. I wish there was a stream nearby; cold water would make them feel better. [Pushes hair back from face.] It wouldn't do any harm to my face, either. I'll rest here for a moment before I go further. It will soon be nightfall and I want to be out of the woods before darkness comes. [Looks in knapsack for food.] Not even a crumb left! Oh, I'm so hungry. I don't know whether I can go on any further—it's such a long journey. I've wondered often this day why I ever ventured away from my own village. Of course, there is no reason why I should have stayed there. For weeks I've tried to find a means to earn my way. I've begged on the streets and along the water front, but I got so few coins. Everyone was a poor as I—no one could spare even a halfpenny for a homeless boy. I shiver now when I think of those cold wintry nights that I spent sleeping in doorways. Whenever I passed the houses that were lighted and warm, I'd just stand and stare and stare at them. Once an officer was going to put me in prison for peeping into the windows of a grand house. It was such a lovely house—I couldn't go past it. When the officer seized me, I let out a cry. I was so frightened. An old gentleman heard me and before the officer could hurry me away, he came over to us. "What's the trouble officer?" he asked. "Just another thieving waif," he replied. "No, no!" I cried, "I'm not a thief. I may be dirty and ragged; I may have no home, or I may be terribly, terribly hungry; but I never steal." That old gentleman believed me, for he got me free from the officer. Then he gave me two shillings and told me to go on my way. That night I bought a sugared bun-and oh, it was so good! Ever since that night I've wanted to be a grand gentleman so I could help other people. That's why I'm going to London Town now. I know there's a change there for me—if—I ever get there. [Looks around]. I wonder how much farther it is. If I follow this road—is it the shortest way? [Gets up and looks off stage.] There are

wheel marks going on and on down the road. It must lead to the city. [As DICK talks, an APPLE-MAN approaches from the opposite side.]

APPLE-MAN: What ho, my lad! Are you lost?

DICK: Oh, sir, you frightened me! No, I don't think I'm lost. I'm on my way to London Town. This is the road, isn't it?

APPLE-MAN: Yea, and that it is. If you follow it to the edge of the clearing, you'll come right to the high road. Follow that and soon you'll be in London Town.

DICK: Is it far, sir?

APPLE-MAN: I hear it is. I've never been there, but friends of mine were there once. It's a grand city, I hear, [Confidentially] And do you know, lad, I'm told that it's the richest place in the world. It is rumored that even the streets are paved with gold.

DICK: Gold? Oh, sir, surely not in the streets!

APPLE-MAN: That's what I hear; mind you, though I've never seen it—just heard about it.

DICK: [Starts off, turns to APPLE-MAN]: Thank you, sir, for telling me this. I'll come back some day with some of the gold and share it with you.

APPLE-MAN: I'll be waiting—if you're not too long in getting back. [DICK starts off again.] Lad! [DICK turns back.] You've got a kind heart and noble spirit; but I think 'twill need more to make a grand gentleman of you.

DICK: What do you mean, sir?

APPLE-MAN: You look so worn and hungry now that I doubt you'll ever get to London. It's a long trip, you know. When did you eat last?

DICK [Hesitating]: Oh—not long ago.

APPLE-MAN: Not long ago! That could be hours—or—maybe a day ago! And what did you eat? [DICK hangs head.] I thought so! [Reaches into bag.] I haven't much left from the day at the market, but here! I'll share with you! A half loaf from my lunch—and—two nice red apples!

DICK: Oh, sir, I couldn't take them! [Looks at them longingly.]

APPLE-MAN: No? Well, I'll bargain with you. You take the food and when you're a rich and grand gentleman, you can pay me for them. You'll come back dressed in fine cloth and lace—drawn in a magnificent coach, and stop at the square to ask the whereabouts of Jack, the apple-man. And I'll step forward and say, unconscious—like, "Oh, my young friend, Lord—"But who'll you be?

DICK: Not a lord, friend; just plain Dick Whittington.

APPLE-MAN: Nay, not plain Dick Whittington—Lord Dick Whittington! [Bows low.]

DICK: You jest with me! [Looks at food.] It's a bargain, sir. I'll take your food in exchange for my promise to pay you many times over when I make my fortune. [Both laugh heartily. Unseen approaches the WAGONER.]

WAGONER: Fortune must have smiled on you this day, Jack, the apple-man. [DICK and APPLE-MAN turn, astonished.]

APPLE-MAN: Oh, my friend, 'tis indeed true. Fortune in the form of Lord Whittington. [Bows low.]

[WAGONER glances critically at DICK.]

WAGONER: This stripling—this is Lord Whittington?

APPLE-MAN: No other, my friend. He's on his way to London Town to claim his fortune.

WAGONER: And your coach, my Lord—does it wait on the high road?

DICK: Nay, sir. I have neither coach nor steed—nor am I a nobleman. Just Dick Whittington, homeless, penniless-a wayfarer on his way to London Town.

WAGONER: You've heard the tale of gold, then—how 'tis so plentiful that it's used to pave the streets. Even the wayfarer can fill his purse as he goes about the city.

DICK: The apple-man has just told me about it; but I know that such a

report lacks truth. If it were true, then all the world would go to London, and there would be too little left for another fortunate.

WAGONER: 'Tis the way I'm thinking, too, lad. But if it's not a fortune you seek, why go you there?

DICK: 'Tis a fortune I seek, sir, but not by picking it from the streets. I seek work and a chance to grow into useful manhood.

WAGONER: I hear that London's a busy mart: many may find work there. But you—why you're but a lad. What can you do?

DICK: Many tasks, sir, if I have the opportunity to prove myself. That is all I ask. But I must be on my way now. [Turns to APPLE-MAN.] Many thanks, sir, to you. I shall not forget our bargain. [To WAGONER.] Could you direct me, sire, to the shortest way?

WAGONER: Follow this road to the edge of the clearing—that's the high road ahead. Follow it. London's at the end.

DICK: Thank you, sir. [Starts off, stops and turns to the two men talking together.] And the distance, sire? Is it less that one day's journey?

WAGONER: Not unless you have wings. I'd say that, if you walk fast and waste not time along the wayside, you'd be in London Town by tomorrow night. [Continues conversation with APPLE-MAN.]

DICK: [Disappointed.]: Tomorrow night! [Stops thoughtfully.] "tis much further than I thought. I'm already exhausted— [Looks in knapsack.] and I have but little food-[Stops.] I can't go. I'll return! I'll find some way— [In whisper.] There are those bells again—what are they saying? Listen! [Slowly.] "Turn again, Dick Whittington, thrice Lord Mayor of London!" What do they mean? Why do they echo my name? [Turns again to WAGONER and APPLE-MAN.] Pardon, sirs, those bells, sirs, what do they say?

APPLE-MAN [Listening]: Night—again; —night's come again—night—again—all's well!

WAGONER: Aye, right again. I must be on my way. Good night, my friend. My horse has had a long rest this afternoon—he'll think I've deserted him. [Starts off.] Good night! [Turns to DICK.] If you're leaving now, lad, I could

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take you to the high road in my wagon.

DICK: Oh, thank you, sir. That I should appreciate so much.

WAGONER: Well, come then, with me. It's no royal coach I have—just a small wagon.

DICK: Thank you, sir. [WAGONER and DICK start off. DICK turns to APPLE-MAN.] Lose not patience, my benefactor, I shall not forget you nor your kindness.

[Exit.]

APPLE-MAN: Good fortune to you, lad. You're a brave boy and true.



