

HENRY THE MOUSE: A WINTER'S TALE



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To Beatrix Potter in mind, and to my cherished
Cecilia at heart...

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Once upon a time, there lived a family of mice called the Woods family. The Woods family has five members. Papa Woods, Mama Woods, Johnny Woods, Terry Woods, and their youngest son, Henry Woods.



Today is Christmas and when Christmas comes to visit, then so does Grandpa and Grandma. They are going to have supper together. So Papa Woods went out with his car to pick up Grandpa and Grandma in town.



While Papa is out, everyone stays home and prepares the house for the coming event. Well, actually, almost everyone, for little Henry is having a great time alone with his toys.



But playing alone over time seems oh-so-lonely! He needs to get someone to play with him. So, Henry ran out his room, and straight to Terry he went. "Terry, do you want to play with me?" Henry asked politely.

"Sorry Henry, but I have to help Mum sweep the floor." Terry answered while continuing his work. "You can go and ask Johnny if he wants to play with you."

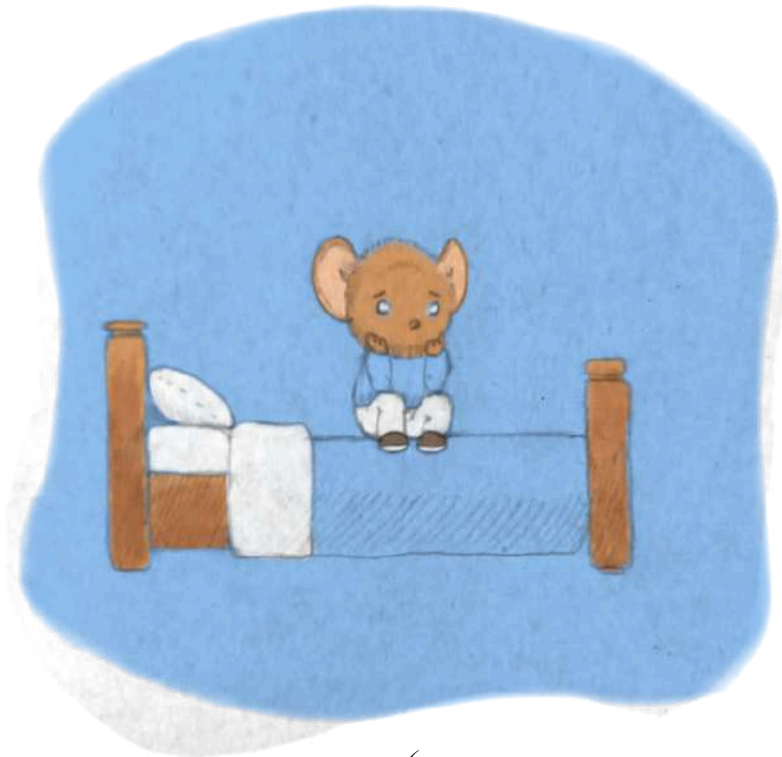


Henry watched Terry for a while before leaving to look for Johnny. "Brother Johnny, do you want to play with me?" He asked again. But Johnny declined too and said "Oh, I'm sorry Henry, I have to help Mum with the dishes and the table."



“Oh,” Henry said sadly. “Alright then, sorry for bothering you, Brother Johnny.” And so, Henry walked back to his room, all sad and blue.

But Mama Woods heard all of it from the kitchen. So, she turned off her stove and went to Henry’s room. There, she saw Henry sitting on his bed and looking sad, for no one could play with him.



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“Henry, dear, why do you look so sad?” Mama Woods asked him gently. “Nobody wants to play with me, Mum. They are all busy cleaning the house.” Henry answered.

And so, Mama Woods says “Oh, I’m sorry to hear that, dear. But Grandpa and Grandma are coming over soon, Henry. So, we must prepare everything from the table to their rooms. That is our responsibility. I hope you can understand, sweetie.”

Henry understands, and so he nods. Then, Mama Woods asked him “Now that you understand it, do you want to help Mum with something?”

“What can I help you with, Mum?” Henry does not know what to do. He is confused. Mama Woods smiled at him, and said “Well, we haven’t wrapped the presents for grandpa and grandma, right?”

Henry shook his head and said “No, we have not.” Then, Mama Woods kindly asked him to help wrap the presents, and promised Henry that he can go and play after he has finished wrapping the presents. So Henry went to the living room and wrapped the presents there.



Moments passed and Papa Woods finally returned from his journey to town. Grandpa and Grandma are also here. Food is ready, the table is set, the house is clean, and so are the presents! And so, the Woods family enjoyed a wonderful Christmas dinner.



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By the end of the dinner when everyone was full and warm, Henry left the table and went to get the presents he had wrapped for Grandpa and Grandma.

Grandpa and Grandma opened the gifts as soon as they arrived. Of course, they are happy with the gifts. Grandpa gets a pair of new glasses while Grandma gets a new sweater. "How beautiful is that!" Grandma squeaked. "Thank you, dear!" They both told Henry.

Henry feels happy too, and said "You're welcome, Grandpa and Grandma!" So, the Woods enjoy their Christmas, warm and full. And at last, Henry gets to play with his brothers just like Mama promised. This day, to Henry, is the best Christmas day ever!

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