

Read Part II of the tale *The Devoted Friend* and answer the question:

Why was little Hans glad that he did not refuse when the Miller needed his help?

The Devoted Friend Part II

The next day when little Hans was working in his garden he heard the Miller's voice calling to him from the road. The Miller had a large sack of flour on his back.

"Dear little Hans," said the Miller, "would you mind carrying this sack of flour for me to market and selling it for me? As I am going to give you my wheelbarrow, I don't think you will refuse." "Oh, no, no," cried little Hans and he went to the market because the Miller was his best friend. It was a very hot day, and the road was terribly dusty. Hans got very tired when he reached the market. He had waited there for some time and at last sold the sack of flour at a very good price. "It has certainly been a hard day," he said to himself as he was going to bed, "but I am glad I did not refuse the Miller, for he is my best friend and, besides, he is going to give me his wheelbarrow."

Early the next morning the Miller came down to get the money for his sack of flour, but little Hans was so tired that he was still in bed.

"Upon my word," said the Miller, "you are very lazy. Really, I think you ought to work harder. Idleness is a great sin, and I certainly don't like my friends to be idle. You must not mind my speaking quite plainly to you. Of course I should not dream of doing so if I were not your friend. But what is the good of friendship if one cannot say exactly what one means? Anybody can say nice things and try to please and to flatter, but a true friend always says unpleasant things, and does not mind giving pain. Indeed, if he is a really good friend he prefers it, for he knows that then he is doing good." "I am very sorry," said little Hans, "but I was so tired that I thought I would lie in bed for a little while, and listen to the birds singing. Do you know that I always work better after hearing the birds sing?" "Well, I am glad of that," said the Miller, "for I want you to come up to the mill as soon as you are dressed and mend my barn roof for me."

Poor little Hans was very anxious to go and work in his garden, for his flowers had not been watered for two days, but he did not like to refuse the Miller, as he was such a good friend to him. So he jumped out of bed, and dressed himself, and went up to the barn.

Hans was never able to look after his flowers at all, for his friend the Miller was always coming round and sending him off or asking him to come up and help at the mill.

"There is no work so delightful as the work one does for others," the Miller used to say. So little Hans worked away for the Miller, and the Miller said all kinds of beautiful things about friendship. One rainy evening little Hans was sitting by his fireside when a loud knock came at the door. "It is some poor traveller," said little Hans to himself, and he ran to the door. There stood the Miller. "Dear little Hans," cried the Miller, "I am in great trouble. My little boy has fallen off a ladder and hurt himself. I thought that it would be much better if you went for the Doctor instead of me. You know I am going to give you my wheelbarrow, and so it is only fair that you should do something for me in return."

"Certainly", cried little Hans, "but you must lend me your lantern, as the night is so dark that I am afraid of falling into the ditch."

"I am very sorry," answered the Miller, "but it is my new lantern, and it would be a great loss to me if anything happened to it."

"Well, never mind, I will do without it," cried little Hans and started off. What a terrible storm it was! The night was so black that little Hans could hardly see, and the wind was so strong that he could hardly stand. However, he was very courageous, and after he had been walking about three hours, he arrived at the Doctor's house. The Doctor immediately rode off towards the Miller's house.

Little Hans was walking behind him. The storm grew worse and worse, and he could not see where he was going. At last he lost his way and found himself in a very dangerous place which was full of deep holes, and there poor little Hans was drowned.

"Little Hans is certainly a great loss to me," said the Miller. "I have given him my wheelbarrow, and now I don't know what to do with it. One certainly suffers for being generous."

Answer the questions about the text:

What did little Hans do for the Miller the next two days?

What happened to the Miller's son one evening?

Why didn't the Miller go for the Doctor himself but asked little Hans to do it?

Why did the Miller refuse to give little Hans his lantern?

Discussing the Story

EXERCISE 1. *Look through the text again and prove that Hans was honest and generous, hardworking and courageous, had a kind heart and was a devoted friend.*

EXERCISE 2.

a) *How do these quotations characterize the Miller?*

"I will give you my wheelbarrow. I know it is very generous of me. I think that generosity is the essence of friendship, and, besides, I have got a new wheelbarrow for myself."

"And now, as I have given you my wheelbarrow, I am sure you would like to give me some flowers in return."

"You know, as I have given you my wheelbarrow, it is only fair that you should do something for me in return."

"I'm very sorry," answered the Miller, "but it is my new lantern, and it would be a great loss to me if anything happened to it."

b) *Compare the Miller's words with his actions. Characterize the Miller.*

EXERCISE 3. *These are the Miller's ideas about friendship. Say what you think of them:*

"Real friends should have everything in common."

"When people are in trouble it is better to leave them alone and not to bother them by visits."

"Flour is one thing, and friendship is another, and they should not be confused."

"I may be wrong, but I think that friendship, true friendship, is quite free from selfishness of any kind."

"What is the good of friendship if one cannot say exactly what one means? Anybody can say nice things to please and to flatter, but a true friend always says unpleasant things, and does not mind giving pain. Indeed, if he is a really good friend he prefers it, for he knows that he is doing good."

EXERCISE 4. *This is what the Miller used to say about generosity and envy, about words and actions, and about the work one does for others. Which of these ideas do you agree or disagree with?*

"I think that generosity is the essence of friendship."

"Envy is a most terrible thing, and can spoil anybody's nature."

"Lots of people act well, but very few people talk well, which shows that talking is much the more difficult thing of the two, and much the finer thing also."

"There is no work so delightful as the work one does for others."

EXERCISE 5. *Read the following proverbs. How do you understand them? Do you agree with them? Which of these proverbs will better fit the moral of the story "The Devoted Friend"?*

Friendship cannot stand always on one side.

Between friends all is common.

Actions speak louder than words.

Not he who has much is rich, but he who gives much.

No man is useless while he has a friend.

Prosperity makes friends, adversity tries them.