

THE OLD MAN AND HIS GRANDSON

Taken from Children's Classics in Dramatic Form
A Reader for the Fourth Grade
By Augusta Stevenson
Adapted from Grimm's Fairy Tales

Time: Now.

Place: A house

Characters: The Man, His Wife, Their Son – Little Hans, The Grandfather.

The Man and his wife, Little Hans and the Grandfather all sit at the table eating the noon meal.

Man: Be careful, Father! You are spilling the soup on your coat.

Grandfather: (Trying to steady his trembling hand.) Yes, yes, I'll be careful.

(Short pause.)

Wife: (Sharply) Grandfather! You have spilled the soup on my clean tablecloth!

Grandfather: (Embarrassed) Dear me! Dear me!

(Short pause.)

Man: Here, Father, is your plate of meat.

(The old man takes the plate, but lets it fall.)

Wife: (Angrily) There now! Just see what you have done!

Grandfather: My hand shook so. I'm sorry, so sorry!

Wife: That won't mend the plate!

Man: Nor buy a new one!

Wife: (To her husband) He should eat from wooden dishes.

Man: (Nodding, pointing to a wooden dish.) Let him have that one for his meat.

(The grandfather sighs sadly. The Wife gets a wooden dish and fills it with meat. Little Hans leaves the table and plays with his blocks on the floor.)

Wife: (Handing the wooden dish to the grandfather.) Here's one you can't break. Now go and sit in the corner behind the oven. You shall eat there hereafter. I cannot have my tablecloths soiled. That I cannot!

(The grandfather takes his wooden plate and goes to the seat in the corner behind the oven. His eyes are filled with tears.)

Man: Come, little Hans, and finish your dinner.

Wife: (Turning to Hans.) Bless me! What are you making, child?

Hans: A wooden trough for you and father to eat out of when I grow big.

(The Man and his Wife look at each other. There is a pause.)

Man: (Showing shame.) He will treat us as we have treated Father!

Wife: (Weeping.) It will serve us right!

Man: (Kindly) Father, throw that wooden dish out of the window. I am ashamed of what I have done. Forgive me.

Wife: (Kindly) Father, come back to the table. I too am ashamed. Forgive me, dear Father.