

Special Lesson 1 The True Treasure

The Golden Windows

After working hard all day long, a boy would go up to the top of a hill and look across at another hill.

On this far hill stood a house with windows of gold and diamond. They shone at sunset, but after a while, the fascinating light disappeared. The boy supposed that the people in the house closed the shutters because it was dinnertime.

One day, the boy's father called him over and said, "You have been a good boy and have earned a holiday. Take the day off, but try to learn something important." The boy thanked his father and kissed his mother; then he took a piece of bread, and left to find the house with the golden windows.

His journey was enjoyable. His bare feet made marks in the white sand. When he looked back, the footprints seemed to be following him and keeping him company. His shadow, too, stayed beside him and would dance or run with him as he pleased. Before long, he felt hungry, so he sat down by a stream to eat his bread and drink the clear water.

He scattered the remaining pieces of bread for the birds, as his mother had taught him to do, and went on his way.

After a long time, he came to a high green hill, and the house was at the top. It seemed that the shutters were closed, for he could not see the golden windows. He came up to the house and was disappointed to find that the windows were made of clear glass, like any others, and there was no gold anywhere around them.

A woman came to the door, looked kindly at the boy, and asked him what he wanted. "I saw the golden windows from the top of our hill," he said, "and I came to see them, but now they are only glass." The woman shook her head and laughed. "We are poor farming people," she said, "and are not likely to have windows made of gold; but glass is better to see through."

She told the boy to sit down on the step in front of the door, brought him a snack, and called her daughter, a girl of his own age. Then she smiled at the two and went back to her work.

Although the girl's clothes were modest, her hair was golden like the windows he had seen, and her eyes were blue like the sky. She led the boy around the farm and showed him her black calf, which had a white star on its forehead. The boy told her about his own calf at home, which was red like a chestnut and had white feet. Feeling as if they were now friends, the boy asked her about the golden windows. The girl said she knew all about them, only he had mistaken which house had them.

"You have come the wrong way!" she said. "Come with me. I will show you the house with the golden windows, and then you will see for yourself." The girl told him that the golden windows could only be seen at sunset. "Yes, I know that!" said the boy. They went to a high place and saw a house with windows of gold and diamond on a hill far away, just as the boy had seen before. And when they looked again, the boy recognized that it was his own home.

Then he told the girl that he must go; and he gave her his best pebble, a white one with a red stripe that he had carried with him for a year; and she gave him three horse-chestnuts, one red, one spotted, and one white. He promised to come again, but he did not tell her what he had learned. The girl stood in the light of the sunset and watched him go.

It was dark when the boy finally returned home, but the windows of his home were shining with the light of lamps just like he had seen from the top of the hill. His family welcomed him warmly. "Have you had a good day?" asked his mother. Yes, the boy had had a very good day. "And have you learned anything?" asked his father. "Yes!" said the boy. "I have learned that our house has windows of gold and diamond."