

OXFORD
SCHOOL EDUCATION

Revised
Edition

4

Oxford Reading Circle

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A Legend of Rubezahl

Once upon a time a glazier was travelling across the mountains. The mountain path was narrow, dusty and covered in small sharp stones. To the sides of the paths were prickly shrubs and boulders. In the sky above, the sun shone brightly which made the glazier's load feel heavier.

The glazier was a good man who worked hard. He was feeling very tired from carrying the heavy load of glass so he began to look about for a place where he could rest.

Rubezahl, a mountain sprite, had been watching the glazier for some time. As soon as he saw that the glazier was looking for a place to stop, he skipped ahead around a bend in the path and changed himself into a little mound covered in

glazier

a person who cuts and fits glass into doors and windows.



soft grass that looked like a comfortable place to rest. When the glazier discovered the mound in his way, he smiled and, feeling well pleased, he put down the glass and sat himself down. 'Ah! That's better', he said. But his joy was not to last. After just a few minutes, the mound vanished from under him so rapidly that the poor glazier fell to the ground with his glass. The fall smashed the glazier's glass into a thousand pieces.

The poor fellow arose from the ground and looked around him, but the mound of earth had disappeared. The glazier began to wail and

groan bitterly, 'Oh no! Oh no! My family will go hungry.' He sighed, with heartfelt sorrow over his bad luck and looked in dismay at the glass shards scattered around him. How was he going to earn any money?

After a while the glazier started once more on his journey. He walked slowly with his head down and a frown on his face. At this point Rubezahl, the mischievous mountain sprite, quickly disguised himself as a traveller. He walked up a side path and greeted the glazier, 'Hello my good man!' The glazier tried to smile but his worry and disappointment was plain to see on his face. Rubezahl spoke to him: 'Why do you look so sad on this sunny day? What has given you such great sorrow?'

The glazier told him the whole affair, how that, being weary, he had seated himself upon a mound by the wayside, how it had suddenly disappeared from under him and broken to pieces his whole stock of glass, which was well worth at least eight dollars. 'I don't know how I am going to recover this loss!' he wailed.

sprite

an elf or fairy-like small, magical person

roasted and boiled turnips. Nothing but the best!

The boy's hair stood on end. He flew to his master and related to him this wondrous tale. The miller and the boy rushed back to the stable. There they found nothing. The donkey, like the nine dollars, had vanished. The miller was so shocked that he forgot to shout at the boy and scratched his head in puzzlement. Back on the mountain, Rubezahl laughed to himself. The mean miller had been punished; the glazier, with nine dollars in his pocket, was happy again and Rubezahl had enjoyed himself by playing tricks.

Adapted and abridged
from a German folktale



Exercises

A. Questions

1. Why was the glazier feeling tired?
2. What did Rubezahl disguise himself as first?
3. What did Rubezahl disguise himself as second?
4. What was Rubezahl's third disguise?
5. Find two examples from the story that show us that the miller was an unpleasant man.
6. How do you think the stable boy felt when the donkey spoke to him?
7. Which of the following sentences is true?
 - a. The donkey was sold for eight dollars.
 - b. The glazier bought a donkey.
 - c. The miller was a kind man.

B. Reference to context

Who said the following, to whom and when?

1. 'Hey get this donkey some hay!'
2. 'Hello my good man!'
3. 'Don't worry and be happy for I will help you get your money back'
4. 'Ah! That's better.'
5. 'There you go old chap, better eat quickly because you'll be set to work soon.'
6. 'I don't eat hay. I eat nothing but roasted and boiled turnips. Nothing but the best!'