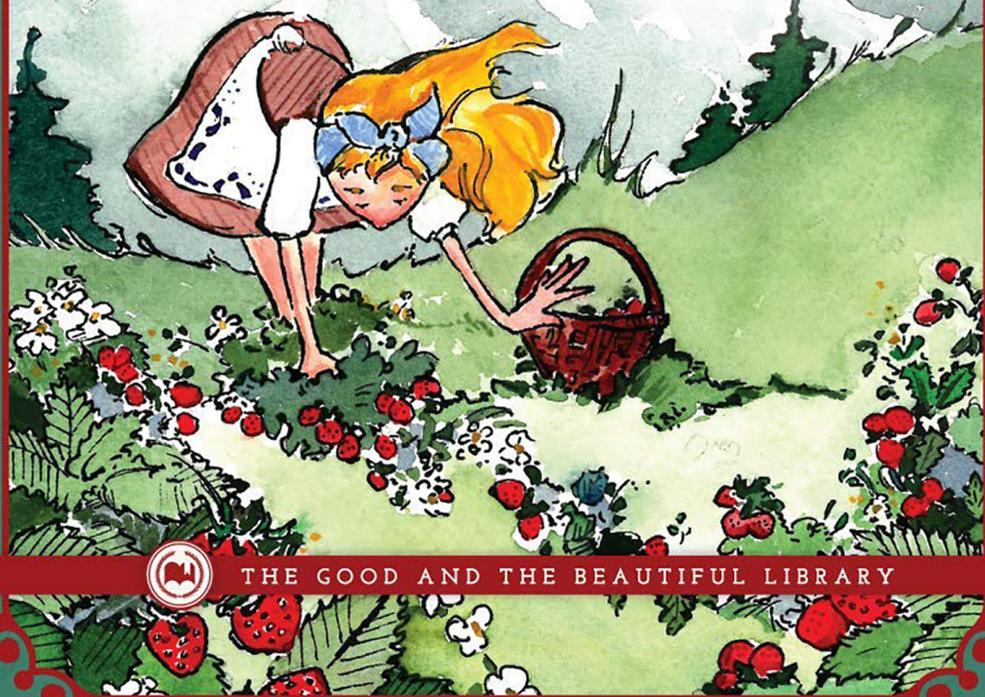


# TRINI,

The Strawberry Girl

ALSO INCLUDES LITTLE MISS GRASSHOPPER by Johanna Spyri



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## CHAPTER 1

### *The Old Washerwoman's Trouble*

Old Katie, the washerwoman, was sitting in her little room in the lonely mountain hut and looking thoughtfully at her knotted hands, which she had spread out before her on her knees. Until the last gleam of evening light had died out behind the distant forest-clad mountains, she had worked away industriously at her spinning wheel. Now she had pushed it a little to one side, for her hands might well be tired, they looked so bent and worn by work. The old woman sighed and said to herself:

“Oh, if I could only work as I used to!”

She naturally thought of working, for she had done that bravely all her life long, and had accomplished a great deal. Now she was old, and the once robust and untiring washerwoman could do nothing more, except some spinning, and that brought in so little. Still, for the last few years, she had managed in this way and also supported her grandchild, who was living with her and couldn't earn much as yet. She, too, made a little money, for she was a bright, clever child.

Today the grandmother felt unusually troubled, for her heart had been heavy ever since early morning. Her grandchild,

merry Trini, whom she had brought up from a baby, was now in her twelfth year. She would leave school in the spring and then go out to service. Early that morning a distant cousin had come up from Reusstal and had proposed to the old grandmother to give the child over to him. To be sure, he had not much himself and couldn't pay anything, but down below there was good work to be found in the new factory, which had been built on the Reuss River with its abundant water supply. There Trini could earn a good sum of money during the week, and besides, could do the necessary work in his house, for which he would give her lodging. Since his wife was sickly and they couldn't keep a maid, they desired to have the child, for they knew she was big and strong and very handy.

The grandmother had listened in silence, but his words had stirred up a great struggle in her heart. The cousin also desired to have the child come down in the autumn as the half school year could be shortened, for she knew enough already and could then be earning something directly, and his wife needed her especially in the winter.

Still, the grandmother said nothing. Then, when the cousin urged her and wanted her consent at once, she said he must give her a little time and must not press her to give her decision before the autumn. She saw the advantage to the child, but she must first think it over and then talk with Trini about it.

The cousin was not much pleased, for he wanted to have it all decided and the day named when Trini would come down. He thought it was unnecessary to talk with the

child, who had no judgment and did not know what would be for her advantage. But the grandmother remained firm. Towards autumn he might come again, and then he should receive his answer. If she decided to let the child go, he could then take her away with him at once, but for the moment, she could say nothing further. She remained firm in this. The cousin saw that there was nothing else to be done. Still, he warned the old woman not to disregard the child's interest, for it would be to her own advantage if the child was earning something and could, later on, support her. Then he went away.

The whole day long, while the grandmother was at work, the cousin's words pursued her, but she did not have time to think them over carefully. Now in the twilight, she considered the matter step by step and several times sighed deeply. The cousin was right. It would be a great advantage to the child to be able to go into his house and go from there to find assured work in the factory. She herself knew of no better way for the child; she really knew of no other at all. Round about there were only small farms, which the people themselves cultivated, and besides, they had enough help in their own children. Wherever maids were kept, as they were in the parsonage or the bailiff's house or in the new hotel, they had to be older girls; strong, capable persons who knew how to manage the kitchen and garden. The farmer's wife, too, at the Golden Apple, the big fruit farm, always had a maid, but a big, strong one who could help her about everything, and even such a one could not stay long with her. If a grown person could not do the work right for her, of what use would a child like Trini be? But the grandmother realized very well that the child, in

the spring when she was through school, would have to find work.

Since she could no longer go all about working as a washerwoman as she did formerly, but had to spin her cheap yarn laboriously with her knotted fingers, she could hardly keep herself and the child, and it was becoming harder with each day. And yet to be separated from the child – this seemed to the grandmother the very hardest thing that could happen to her. And would not the new work be too strenuous for the young child? The old woman knew very well how it was with her cousin. He had a rough, unfriendly manner and was usually cross because his wife was always half sick and, therefore, not good-natured. She usually sat sad and almost stupid in her chimney corner without saying a word. Now she had grown so much worse that her husband had been obliged to consider bringing help into the house. So the child would have to attend to the tasks in the house all alone and then go to work in the factory if she was to earn anything. Was not the child still too young for all this work? And would it not be too hard for her to go far away from her grandmother, who was so fond of her, to an entirely strange house, and never hear a word of love or sympathy while being overworked? Her beloved Trini was not accustomed to this.

Then came before the grandmother's eyes the day when she had been brought into her house, a little helpless thing whom nobody wanted and nobody would care for. At that time she had strong hands and robust health, and if she had to work early and late, she did it willingly.

Katie, the washerwoman, had had three children, two sons, and a daughter. Her husband had died of a raging fever when all three children were still quite small. Then Katie had had to work with all her might to keep the little ones always clothed and free from want. She worked day and night, and everyone round about called on her to help with the big washings, for they knew very well that no one did such good work as Katie, who from the occupation was known everywhere as Washer Katie.

When her sons were grown, they longed to go away and went together to America. The daughter married and went down into the valley. But not much more than a year later, she died suddenly while still very young. This distressed her husband so much that he could no longer remain at home. He brought little Trini up to her grandmother and said:

“There, Mother, take the child. I don’t know what to do with her. I must go away. I can’t bear it here any longer.”

Then he went to his brothers-in-law in America.

From that day forth Katie, the washerwoman, had a new care, but also a new and great delight after much trouble and sorrow. Little Trini grew very fast and repaid her kind grandmother for her trouble and work with unusual love and attachment, and also furnished her with much amusement, for the child was constantly active and lively, like a sprightly little fish in the water. Each year she grew dearer and more indispensable to the grandmother.

All these days of the past now rose in the twilight before the old washerwoman, and the thought of letting the child go so far away from her, and perhaps for all time, made her

heart heavier and heavier. But she knew a comforter who had already helped her through many a trouble and had changed many a dreaded misfortune to a blessing for her. This she could not forget. So, instead of turning these hard thoughts over and over in her mind, she decided to leave the whole matter to the dear Lord. If it had to be, and this sorrow of separation had to come to her, the dear Lord's hand would be in it. Everything would be ordered for the child's best good. When the grandmother had reached this decision, she folded her hands quietly and said reverently to herself:

*“And now, my soul, be trustful still;  
Have faith and never lose it;  
E'en though thy path be at God's will  
And not as thou would choose it;  
And when thy troubled course is run  
And thou thy joyful goal hast won,  
Pour out thy praise and gladness.”*



## CHAPTER 2

### *Among the Strawberries*

While old Katie was sitting so still, first at her spinning wheel and then in the twilight, there was considerable noise up on the Sonnenrain. Here every year grew an abundance of the finest, juiciest strawberries. When they were thoroughly ripe, it often looked as if a big, dark red carpet hung down from the mountain glowing in the sun. The place was well known to the children of Hochtannen—as the little mountain hamlet consisting of scattered houses was called. They knew very well that if they let the berries get perfectly ripe, there was greater profit to be gained, for these unusually large, juicy berries sold readily everywhere. So the children watched one another to see that no one took the berries too early, before they had reached the right stage of ripeness.

When on a beautiful June day the school children cried: “They are ripe on the Sonnenrain! They are ripe!” then that same evening, the whole crowd would rush out, each with basket in hand, one trying to outrun the other, for each wanted to be first on the spot and find the finest and ripest berries. The baskets they brought with them, called *kratten*, all had the same shape but were of different sizes.

They were shaped like cylinder hats, with the difference that the hats are open at the bottom where the head goes in, but the baskets at the top where the berries are thrown in.

When the evening passed with the eager work of picking, part into the baskets and part into the mouths, and twilight came on, when the dark red berries could no longer be distinguished from the half-ripe ones, all were called to stop working. Then they covered the baskets with large leaves and fastened two little wooden sticks crosswise over them so that the wind would not blow them away. Now the strawberry song was heard, and the whole crowd, full of gaiety, started homewards, all singing at the top of their voices:

*“Strawberry time, strawberry time,  
Up the mountain-side we climb.  
Fill the baskets with the berries,  
On their stems as large as cherries.  
On the top the leaves are pressed,  
Mine are best, mine are best!”*

The quickest and most agile of all was old Washer Katie’s grandchild, merry Trini. She always knew where the finest berries grew and where the fewest had been gathered. She would fly there and pick with a skill that no other near her could equal, and the slow ones beside her got none at all. Trini did not hesitate to give the others a little push if her eyes fell on a particularly fine spot where there was another crop to be gathered. She never put any into her mouth until her basket was so full that she could fasten

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## Two Books by Johanna Spyri (author of *Heidi*)

Johanna Spyri, author of *Heidi*, wrote many wonderful books that have gone out of print. We are proud to be bringing two of them back into print with this "two-books-in-one" compilation.

### *Trini, The Strawberry Girl*

Every year an abundance of the finest, juiciest strawberries grow on the hills above the little Swiss village where Trini and her grandmother live. When harvest time arrives, Trini is determined to pick more than anyone else so she can sell them and help her aged grandmother with whom she lives. In her ambition, Trini learns some important lessons. She also learns that her strawberry picking is not enough to support her and her grandmother. Will Trini need to go away to find work?

### *Little Miss Grasshopper*

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