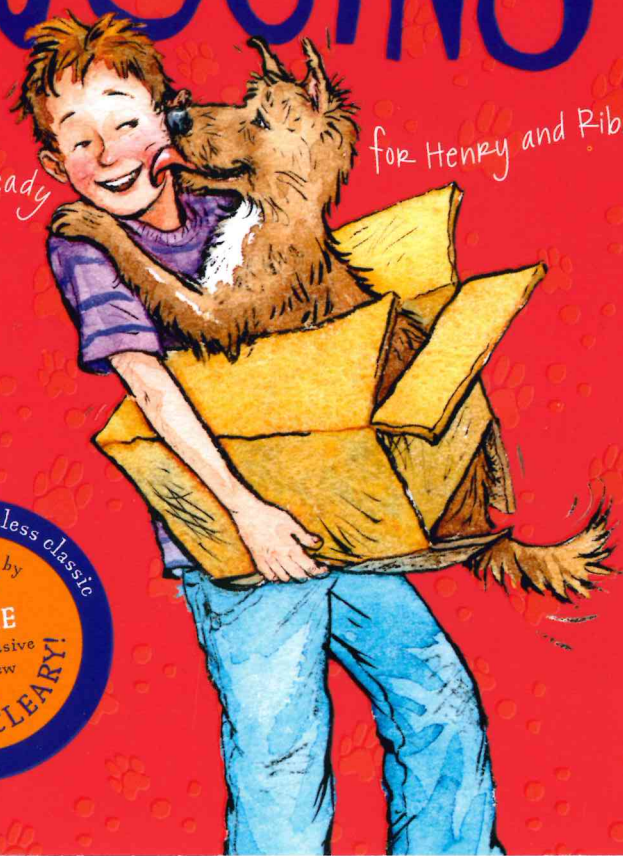


BEVERLY CLEARY

# HENRY HUGGINS

*Is Klickitat  
Street ready*

*for Henry and Ribsy?*



Celebrating a timeless classic  
foreword by  
**JUDY  
BLUME**  
& an exclusive  
interview  
with  
**BEVERLY CLEARY!**

BEVERLY CLEARY

# HENRY HUGGINS

ILLUSTRATED BY  
JACQUELINE ROGERS

**HARPER**

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Henry Huggins

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Books, a division of HarperCollins Publishers,

195 Broadway, New York, NY 10007.

[www.harpercollinschildrens.com](http://www.harpercollinschildrens.com)

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 00-27567

ISBN 978-0-380-70912-0

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Typography by Sarah Nichole Kaufman

16 17 18 19 OPM 64 63 62 61 60 59



Revised edition, 2016

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# 1

## HENRY AND RIBS

**H**enry Huggins was in the third grade. His hair looked like a scrubbing brush and most of his grown-up front teeth were in. He lived with his mother and father in a square white house on Klickitat Street. Except for having his tonsils out when he was six and breaking his arm falling out of a cherry tree when he was seven, nothing much happened to Henry.

I wish something exciting would happen, Henry often thought.

But nothing very interesting ever happened to Henry, at least not until one Wednesday afternoon in March. Every Wednesday after school Henry rode downtown on the bus to go swimming at the Y.M.C.A. After he swam for an hour, he got on the bus again and rode home just in time for dinner. It was fun but not really exciting.

When Henry left the Y.M.C.A. on this particular Wednesday, he stopped to watch a man tear down a circus poster. Then, with three nickels and one dime in his pocket, he went to the corner drugstore to buy a chocolate ice cream cone. He thought he would eat the ice cream cone, get on the bus, drop his dime in the slot, and ride home.

That is not what happened.

He bought the ice cream cone and paid for it with one of his nickels. On his way out of the drugstore he stopped to look at funny books. It was a free look, because he had only two nickels left.

He stood there licking his chocolate ice cream cone and reading one of the funny books when he heard a thump, thump, thump. Henry turned, and there behind him was a dog. The dog was scratching himself. He wasn't any special kind of dog. He was too small to be a big dog but, on the other hand, he was much too big to be a little dog. He wasn't a white dog, because parts of him were brown and other parts were black and in between there were yellowish patches. His ears stood up and his tail was long and thin.

The dog was hungry. When Henry licked, he licked. When Henry swallowed, he swallowed.





"Hello, you old dog," Henry said. "You can't have my ice cream cone."

Swish, swish, swish went the tail. "Just one bite," the dog's brown eyes seemed to say.

"Go away," ordered Henry. He wasn't very firm about it. He patted the dog's head.

The tail wagged harder. Henry took one last lick. "Oh, all right," he said. "If you're that hungry, you might as well have it."

The ice cream cone disappeared in one gulp.

"Now go away," Henry told the dog. "I have to catch a bus for home."

He started for the door. The dog started, too.

"Go away, you skinny old dog." Henry didn't say it very loudly. "Go on home."

The dog sat down at Henry's feet. Henry

looked at the dog and the dog looked at Henry.

"I don't think you've got a home. You're awful thin. Your ribs show right through your skin."

Thump, thump, thump replied the tail.

"And you haven't got a collar," said Henry.

He began to think. If only he could keep the dog! He had always wanted a dog of his very own and now he had found a dog that wanted him. He couldn't go home and leave a hungry dog on the street corner. If only he knew what his mother and father would say! He fingered the two nickels in his pocket. That was it! He would use one of the nickels to phone his mother.

"Come on, Ribsy. Come on, Ribs, old boy. I'm going to call you Ribsy because you're so thin."

The dog trotted after the boy to the

telephone booth in the corner of the drugstore. Henry shoved him into the booth and shut the door. He had never used a pay telephone before. He had to put the telephone book on the floor and stand on tiptoe on it to reach the mouthpiece. He gave the operator his number and dropped his nickel into the coin box.

“Hello—Mom?”

“Why, Henry!” His mother sounded surprised. “Where are you?”

“At the drugstore near the Y.”

Ribs began to scratch. Thump, thump, thump. Inside the telephone booth the thumps sounded loud and hollow.

“For goodness’ sake, Henry, what’s that noise?” his mother demanded. Ribs began to whimper and then to howl. “Henry,” Mrs. Huggins shouted, “are you all right?”

“Yes, I’m all right,” Henry shouted back. He never could understand why his mother

always thought something had happened to him when nothing ever did. "That's just Ribsy."

"Ribsy?" His mother was exasperated. "Henry, will you please tell me what is going on?"

"I'm trying to," said Henry. Ribsy howled louder. People were gathering around the phone booth to see what was going on. "Mother, I've found a dog. I sure wish I could keep him. He's a good dog and I'd feed him and wash him and everything. Please, Mom."

"I don't know, dear," his mother said. "You'll have to ask your father."

"Mom!" Henry wailed. "That's what you always say!" Henry was tired of standing on tiptoe and the phone booth was getting warm. "Mom, please say yes and I'll never ask for another thing as long as I live!"

"Well, all right, Henry. I guess there

isn't any reason why you shouldn't have a dog. But you'll have to bring him home on the bus. Your father has the car today and I can't come after you. Can you manage?"

"Sure! Easy."

"And Henry, please don't be late. It looks as if it might rain."

"All right, Mom." Thump, thump, thump.

"Henry, what's that thumping noise?"

"It's my dog, Ribs. He's scratching a flea."

"Oh, Henry," Mrs. Huggins moaned. "Couldn't you have found a dog without fleas?"

Henry thought that was a good time to hang up. "Come on, Ribs," he said. "We're going home on the bus."

When the big green bus stopped in front of the drugstore, Henry picked up his dog. Ribs was heavier than he expected. He had a hard time getting him into the bus.

and was wondering how he would get a dime out of his pocket when the driver said, "Say, sonny, you can't take that dog on the bus."

"Why not?" asked Henry.

"It's a company rule, sonny. No dogs on buses."

"Golly, Mister, how'm I going to get him home? I just have to get him home."

"Sorry, sonny. I didn't make the rule. No animal can ride on a bus unless it's inside a box."

"Well, thanks anyway," said Henry doubtfully, and lifted Ribsby off the bus.

"Well, I guess we'll have to get a box. I'll get you onto the next bus somehow," promised Henry.

He went back into the drugstore followed closely by Ribsby. "Have you got a big box I could have, please?" he asked the man at the toothpaste counter. "I need

one big enough for my dog."

The clerk leaned over the counter to look at Ribs. "A cardboard box?" he asked.

"Yes, please," said Henry, wishing the man would hurry. He didn't want to be late getting home.

The clerk pulled a box out from under the counter. "This hair tonic carton is the only one I have. I guess it's big enough, but why anyone would want to put a dog in a cardboard box I can't understand."

The box was about two feet square and six inches deep. On one end was printed, "Don't Let Them Call You Baldy," and on the other, "Try Our Large Economy Size."

Henry thanked the clerk, carried the box out to the bus stop, and put it on the sidewalk. Ribs padded after him. "Get in, fellow," Henry commanded. Ribs understood. He stepped into the box and sat down just as the bus came around the

corner. Henry had to kneel to pick up the box. It was not a very strong box and he had to put his arms under it. He staggered as he lifted it, feeling like the strong man who lifted weights at the circus. Ribsby lovingly licked his face with his wet pink tongue.

"Hey, cut that out!" Henry ordered. "You better be good if you're going to ride on the bus with me."

The bus stopped at the curb. When it was Henry's turn to get on, he had trouble finding the step because he couldn't see his feet. He had to try several times before he hit it. Then he discovered he had forgotten to take his dime out of his pocket. He was afraid to put the box down for fear Ribsby might escape.

He turned sideways to the driver and asked politely, "Will you please take the dime out of my pocket for me? My hands are full."



The driver pushed his cap back on his head and exclaimed, "Full! I should say they *are* full! And just where do you think you're going with that animal?"

"Home," said Henry in a small voice.

The passengers were staring and most of them were smiling. The box was getting



heavier every minute.

"Not on this bus, you're not!" said the driver.

"But the man on the last bus said I could take the dog on the bus in a box," protested Henry, who was afraid he couldn't hold the dog much longer. "He said it was a company rule."

"He meant a big box tied shut. A box with holes punched in it for the dog to breathe through."

Henry was horrified to hear Ribsy growl. "Shut up," he ordered.

Ribsy began to scratch his left ear with his left hind foot. The box began to tear. Ribsy jumped out of the box and off the bus and Henry jumped after him. The bus pulled away with a puff of exhaust.

"Now see what you've done! You've spoiled everything." The dog hung his head and tucked his tail between his legs. "If I

can't get you home, how can I keep you?"

Henry sat down on the curb to think. It was so late and the clouds were so dark that he didn't want to waste time looking for a big box. His mother was probably beginning to worry about him.

People were stopping on the corner to wait for the next bus. Among them Henry noticed an elderly lady carrying a large paper shopping bag full of apples. The shopping bag gave him an idea. Jumping up, he snapped his fingers at Ribs and ran back into the drugstore.

"You back again?" asked the toothpaste clerk. "What do you want this time? String and paper to wrap your dog in?"

"No, sir," said Henry. "I want one of those big nickel shopping bags." He laid his last nickel on the counter.

"Well, I'll be darned," said the clerk, and handed the bag across the counter.

Henry opened the bag and set it up on the floor. He picked up Ribsy and shoved him hind feet first into the bag. Then he pushed his front feet in. A lot of Ribsy was left over.

The clerk was leaning over the counter watching. "I guess I'll have to have some string and paper, too," Henry said, "if I can have some free."

"Well! Now I've seen everything." The clerk shook his head as he handed a piece of string and a big sheet of paper across the counter.

Ribsy whimpered, but he held still while Henry wrapped the paper loosely around his head and shoulders and tied it with the string. The dog made a lumpy package, but by taking one handle of the bag in each hand Henry was able to carry it to the bus stop. He didn't think the bus driver would notice him. It was getting dark and a crowd

of people, most of them with packages, was waiting on the corner. A few spatters of rain hit the pavement.

This time Henry remembered his dime. Both hands were full, so he held the dime in his teeth and stood behind the woman with the bag of apples. Ribsy wiggled and whined, even though Henry tried to pet him through the paper. When the bus stopped, he climbed on behind the lady, quickly set the bag down, dropped his dime in the slot, picked up the bag, and squirmed through the crowd to a seat beside a fat man near the back of the bus.

“Whew!” Henry sighed with relief. The driver was the same one he had met on the first bus! But Ribs was on the bus at last. Now if he could only keep him quiet for fifteen minutes they would be home and Ribsy would be his for keeps.

The next time the bus stopped Henry

saw Scooter McCarthy, a fifth grader at school, get on and make his way through the crowd to the back of the bus.

Just my luck, thought Henry. I'll bet he wants to know what's in my bag.

"Hi," said Scooter.

"Hi," said Henry.

"Whatcha got in that bag?" asked Scooter.

"None of your beeswax," answered Henry.

Scooter looked at Henry. Henry looked at Scooter. Crackle, crackle, crackle went the bag. Henry tried to hold it more tightly between his knees.

"There's something alive in that bag!" Scooter said accusingly.

"Shut up, Scooter!" whispered Henry.

"Aw, shut up yourself!" said Scooter. "You've got something alive in that bag!"

By this time the passengers at the back

of the bus were staring at Henry and his package. Crackle, crackle, crackle. Henry tried to pat Ribsy again through the paper. The bag crackled even louder. Then it began to wiggle.

"Come on, tell us what's in the bag," coaxed the fat man.

"N-n-n-nothing," stammered Henry. "Just something I found."

"Maybe it's a rabbit," suggested one passenger. "I think it's kicking."

"No, it's too big for a rabbit," said another.

"I'll bet it's a baby," said Scooter. "I'll bet you kidnapped a baby!"

"I did not!"

Ribs began to whimper and then to howl. Crackle, crackle, crackle. Thump, thump, thump. Ribsy scratched his way out of the bag.

"Well, I'll be doggoned!" exclaimed the fat

man and began to laugh. "I'll be doggoned!"

"It's just a skinny old dog," said Scooter.

"He is not! He's a good dog."

Henry tried to keep Ribsy between his knees. The bus lurched around a corner and started to go uphill. Henry was thrown against the fat man. The frightened dog wiggled away from him, squirmed between the passengers, and started for the front of the bus.

"Here, Ribsy, old boy! Come back here," called Henry and started after him.

"E-e-ek! A dog!" squealed the lady with the bag of apples. "Go away, doggie, go away!"

Ribsy was scared. He tried to run and crashed into the lady's bag of apples. The bag tipped over and the apples began to roll toward the back of the bus, which was grinding up a steep hill. The apples rolled around the feet of the people who were standing. Passengers





began to slip and slide. They dropped their packages and grabbed one another.

Crash! A high-school girl dropped an armload of books.

Rattle! Bang! Crash! A lady dropped a big paper bag. The bag broke open and pots and pans rolled out.

Thud! A man dropped a coil of garden hose. The hose unrolled and the passengers found it wound around their legs.

People were sitting on the floor. They were sitting on books and apples. They were even sitting on other people's laps. Some of them had their hats over their faces and their feet in the air.

Skree-e-etch! The driver threw on the brakes and turned around in his seat just as Henry made his way through the apples and books and pans and hose to catch Ribsy.

The driver pushed his cap back on his head. "OK, sonny," he said to Henry.

"Now you know why dogs aren't allowed on buses!"

"Yes, sir," said Henry in a small voice. "I'm sorry."

"You're sorry! A lot of good that does. Look at this bus! Look at those people!"

"I didn't mean to make any trouble," said Henry. "My mother said I could keep the dog if I could bring him home on the bus."

The fat man began to snicker. Then he chuckled. Then he laughed and then he roared. He laughed until tears streamed down his cheeks and all the other passengers were laughing, too, even the man with the hose and the lady with the apples.

The driver didn't laugh. "Take that dog and get off the bus!" he ordered. Ribsy whimpered and tucked his tail between his legs.

The fat man stopped laughing. "See here, driver," he said, "you can't put that boy and his dog off in the rain."

"Well, he can't stay on the bus," snapped the driver.

Henry didn't know what he was going to do. He guessed he'd have to walk the rest of the way home. He wasn't sure he knew the way in the dark.

Just then a siren screamed. It grew louder and louder until it stopped right alongside the bus.

A policeman appeared in the entrance. "Is there a boy called Henry Huggins on this bus?" he asked.

"Oh boy, you're going to be arrested for having a dog on the bus!" gloated Scooter. "I'll bet you have to go to jail!"

"I'm him," said Henry in a very small voice.

"I am he," corrected the lady with the apples, who had been a schoolteacher and couldn't help correcting boys.

"You'd better come along with us," said the policeman.

"Boy, you're sure going to get it!" said Scooter.

"Surely going to get it," corrected the apple lady.

Henry and Ribsby followed the policeman off the bus and into the squad car, where Henry and the dog sat in the backseat.

"Are you going to arrest me?" Henry asked timidly.

"Well, I don't know. Do you think you ought to be arrested?"

"No, sir," said Henry politely. He thought the policeman was joking, but he wasn't sure. It was hard to tell about grown-ups sometimes. "I didn't mean to do anything. I just had to get Ribsby home. My mother said I could keep him if I could bring him home on the bus."

"What do you think?" the officer asked his partner, who was driving the squad car.

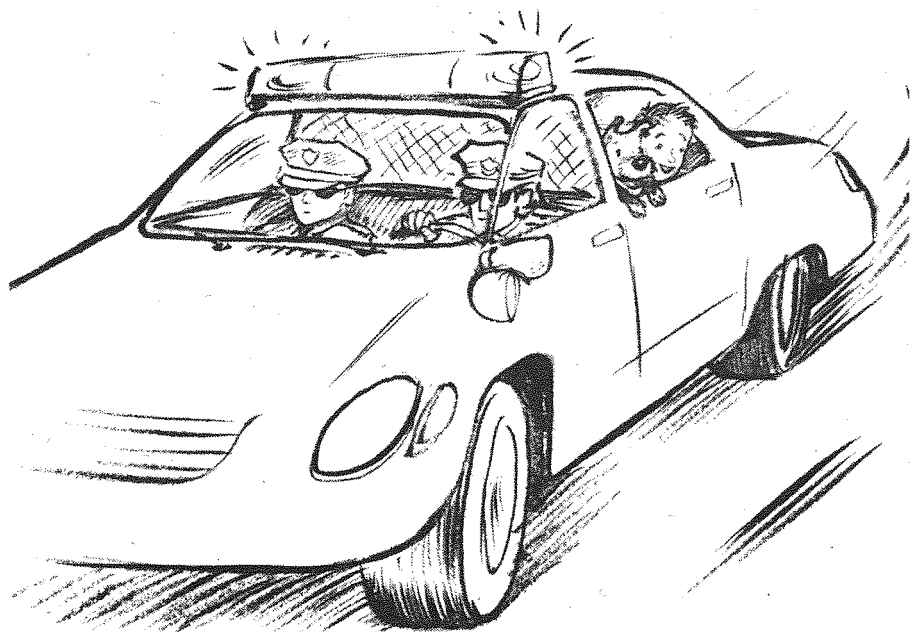
"We-e-ell, I think we might let him off this time," answered the driver. "His

mother must be pretty worried about him if she called the police, and I don't think she'd want him to go to jail."

"Yes, he's late for his dinner already. Let's see how fast we can get him home."

The driver pushed a button and the siren began to shriek. Ribsy raised his head and howled. The tires sucked at the wet pavement and the windshield wipers splip-splopped. Henry began to enjoy himself. Wouldn't this be something to tell the kids at school! Automobiles pulled over to the curb as the police car went faster and faster. Even the bus Henry had been on had to pull over and stop. Henry waved to the passengers. They waved back. Up the hill the police car sped and around the corner until they came to Klickitat Street and then to Henry's block and then pulled up in front of his house.

Henry's mother and father were standing



on the porch waiting for him. The neighbors were looking out of their windows.

“Well!” said his father after the policeman had gone. “It’s about time you came home.

So this is Ribsy! I've heard about you, fellow, and there's a big bone and a can of Feeley's Flea Flakes waiting for you."

"Henry, what *will* you do next?" sighed his mother.

"Golly, Mom, I didn't do anything. I just brought my dog home on the bus like you said."

Ribsy sat down and began to scratch.



## 2

### GALLONS OF GUPPIES

**E**very afternoon after school Ribsy waited for Henry under a fir tree in the corner of the school yard. Four days a week they ran home the shortest way, past the park, up the hill, and through the vacant lot.

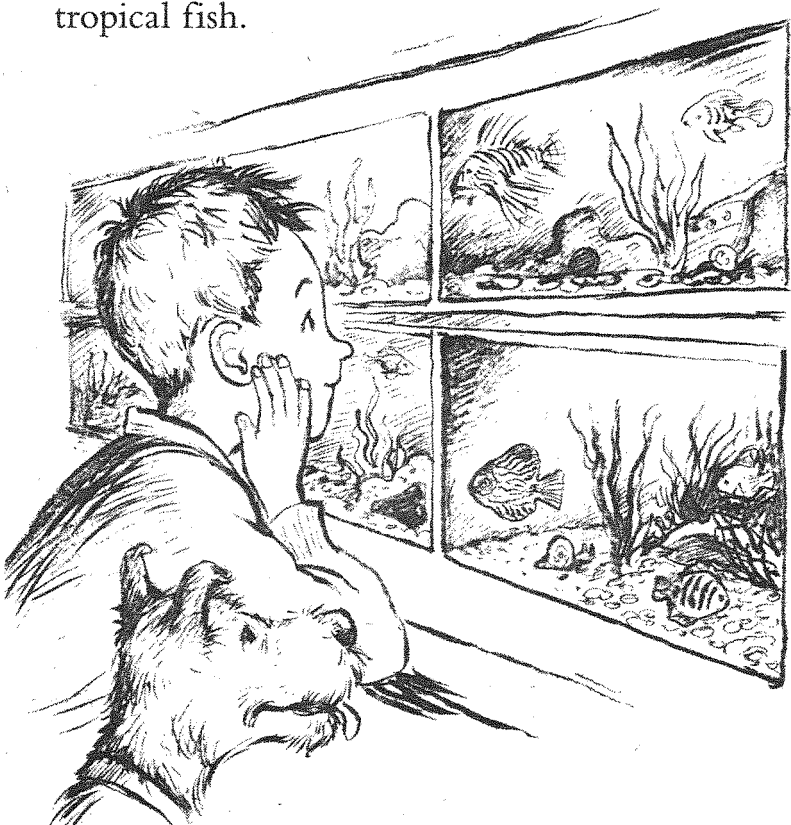
On Fridays, however, they walked home the long way round past the Rose City Drugstore, the Supermarket, the Ideal Barber Shop, and the Lucky Dog Pet Shop.

At the pet store they stopped while Henry bought two pounds of horse meat from Mr. Pennycuff.

Henry liked to go to the pet store. The windows were full of puppies and kittens and, just before Easter, rabbits and baby chicks and ducks. Inside there was usually a parrot or monkey and once there had been a deodorized skunk. Henry thought it would be fun to have a skunk following him around, but when he found it cost forty dollars he gave up the idea.

But best of all Henry liked the fish. One side of the store was covered with rows of little tanks. Each aquarium contained green plants that grew under water, snails, and a different kind of tropical fish. Henry always stopped to look into each tank. He liked the dollar-sized black-and-silver-striped angelfish and the inch-long orange moonfish with their velvety

fins and tails. He thought the tiny catfish were fun to watch, because they stayed on the bottom of the tanks, rolled their eyes, and used their whiskerlike barbels to feel around in the sand for food. Mr. Pennycuff explained that the fish came from all over the world, but most of them came from jungle rivers where the water was warm. That was why they were called tropical fish.



One Friday when Henry went to the pet store he saw a sign that read:

**SPECIAL OFFER**

1 pair of guppies

fishbowl

1 snail

aquatic plant

package of fish food

**ALL FOR 79¢**

“Jeepers!” said Henry. “All that for seventy-nine cents!” He looked at the fish in the bowls. Each bowl held one plain silvery-gray fish almost two inches long and one smaller fish with all the colors of the rainbow. “That really is a bargain!”

“It certainly is,” agreed Mr. Pennycuff. “Shall I wrap up a pair for you?”

Henry felt around in his pocket. The silver dollar his grandfather had given him was still there. He watched the little rainbow fish chase the silvery fish and decided he had to have a pair of guppies. After all, it was his very own money he was spending. He would keep them on the dresser in his room. They would just stay in his room and swim quietly around in their bowl. He didn't see how his mother could object to two quiet little fish that didn't bark or track in mud or anything.

"I'll take a pair," Henry told Mr. Pennycuff, and watched him fasten waxed paper around the top of the bowl with a rubber band and put it into a bag.

"Now be sure to put the bowl near a heater in cold weather so the fish won't get chilled and catch ick."

"Ick?" said Henry.

"Yes, ick. It's short for *ichthyophthirius*.

When the fish get chilled, they catch ick and are covered with tiny white spots.”

“Gosh,” said Henry. Maybe there was more to keeping guppies than he thought.

“Oh, don’t worry,” said Mr. Pennycuff. “They can stand water down to sixty degrees. If it were that cold in the house, you’d have the heat on.”

That sounded easy. “How often do I change the water?” asked Henry.

“You shouldn’t have to change the water. The snails help keep it clean. Just give the fish a tiny pinch of food once a day. It’s only when the fish don’t eat all their food or when you have too many fish in a bowl that the water gets dirty.” Mr. Pennycuff gave Henry his change.

“I didn’t know that,” said Henry. “I’m glad you told me. Here, Ribsy.” He handed Ribsy his package of horse meat. The dog took it in his mouth and they left the pet store. “You’ll have to carry your meat all

the way home today. And don't you stop and try to eat it before we get home, either. It has to last you a few days."

Ribs wagged his tail and trotted on ahead of Henry with his meat. Henry tried to walk without jiggling the package. He didn't want to slosh the guppies any more than he had to. When Ribs was half a block ahead of Henry, he dropped his package and looked back at Henry. Then he began to tear the paper off the meat.

"Hey! Cut that out!" yelled Henry. He started to run but the water in his fishbowl sloshed and he had to stop.

Just to be safe Ribs picked up his meat, trotted farther down the sidewalk, and finished tearing off the paper.

"Stop that! You—you—you old dog!" Again Henry tried to run. This time he held the bowl straight out in front of him, but the water still sloshed.

Ribs gobbled part of the meat and

then trotted ahead with the rest of it in his mouth. Just as Henry was almost close enough to reach for the meat, Ribsy put on a burst of speed.





"Ribsy! You come here!" The dog ignored Henry. "I'll get you for this!" Henry was really angry now. He set his package of guppies on the sidewalk and ran after his dog. This time Henry caught up with him.

Henry grabbed one end of the meat and pulled. Ribsy, growling deep in his throat, hung onto the other end and pulled. The dog had a better grip on the meat because he could sink his teeth into it. Henry found that raw meat was cold and slippery.

"You let go that meat!"

Ribsy growled more fiercely. He sounded as if he meant it. The harder Henry pulled, the louder Ribsy growled.

Henry was sure Ribsy wouldn't really bite him, but just the same he knew it was not a good idea to annoy any animal when it was eating. Anyway, he couldn't stand there all afternoon playing tug-of-war with

a piece of horse meat. His guppies might get cold.

"All right, you old dog! Go ahead and eat it and see if I care. You'll just have to eat canned dog food the rest of the week." He went back to his guppies while Ribsy wolfed the rest of the meat, licked his chops, and then, with his stomach bulging, followed slowly at Henry's heels the rest of the way home.

When they reached Henry's house on Klickitat Street, Henry opened the door and yelled, "Hey, Mom! Come and see what I bought with the silver dollar Grandpa gave me."

"I'm afraid to look," answered his mother from the kitchen. "What is it this time?"

"Fish."

"Fish?" Mrs. Huggins sounded surprised. "Did you want me to cook it for dinner?"

Henry carried his package into the kitchen. "No, Mom, you don't understand. Not dead fish. Live fish swimming around in a bowl of water. They're called guppies."

"Guppies?"

"Yes. Just two little fish. I'll keep them on my dresser and they won't be any trouble at all. They were on sale at the pet shop. They were a bargain. See, Mom?" Henry gently lifted the fishbowl out of the bag.

Mrs. Huggins put down the potato she was peeling. "Why, Henry, what pretty little fish!"

"I thought you'd like them." Henry was pleased.

His mother bent closer to the fishbowl. "But, Henry, what are those little dark things in the water?"

"What little dark things?" Henry looked closer.

"Why, they're baby fish," Mrs. Huggins

exclaimed. "There must be fifteen or twenty."

"Baby guppies!" Henry was delighted. "Look, Mom, did you ever see such teeny-weeny little fish? Golly, they're so little just about all you can see are their eyes and their tails."

Mrs. Huggins sighed. "Henry, I'm afraid they won't be teeny-weeny little fish very long. They'll grow and then what are you going to do with them?"

"I don't know. I'll ask Dad." Henry was worried. "Maybe he knows about baby guppies."

But when Mr. Huggins came home from work, Henry was disappointed to learn that he knew nothing about little guppies. "Why don't you get a book about guppies from the library?" he suggested.

Mrs. Huggins said there would be time before dinner, so Henry found his library

card and he and Ribsby ran all the way to the library.

"Hello, Henry," said the lady in the boys and girls' room at the library. "Have you come for another book about gienats and orges?"

This was a joke between the librarian and Henry. When Henry had first started reading fairy tales by himself he returned a book and asked for another about gienats and orges. He felt a little silly about it now, although he secretly thought gienats and orges sounded better than giants and ogres.

"No, I want a book about guppies," Henry answered. "I have some baby guppies and I don't know how to take care of them."

The librarian found a book on hobbies with a chapter on fish, but it did not tell much about guppies. "Just a minute, Henry," she said. "Maybe there is something in the

adult room." She returned with a thick book about tropical fish. It was full of colored pictures. "I'm sure this will help you," she said, "but I'm afraid it's too hard for you to read. I'll let you take it out on your card if you think your mother and father will help you with it."

"Sure, my dad will help me."

The librarian stamped the book on his card and Henry, proud to have a grown-up book stamped on his library card, ran home with it.

After dinner Mr. Huggins sat down to read the fish book while Henry went to his room to watch his guppies. This time he counted thirty-eight babies. After a while his father came in with the book in his hand. "This is a mighty interesting book, Henry, but you're going to need some more fishbowls. According to this book you can't keep so many fish in one bowl."

"But, Dad, where will I get more bowls?"

"Maybe we can find something in the basement."

So Henry and his father rummaged through the basement until they found a gallon jar Mrs. Huggins used for making dill pickles.

"This should do," said Mr. Huggins. They carried it upstairs and washed it. Mr. Huggins filled it with hot water and carried it into Henry's room. "Now when the water cools we can move some of the little guppies. They can't live in cold water right out of the faucet. They need water that has stood or hot water that has cooled. While it's cooling, we can make a net." He found a piece of wire and bent it into a circle. Mrs. Huggins took an old stocking and sewed it to the wire to make a little fish net.

Henry and his father took turns catching the tiny fish with the net and moving them into the pickle jar. Henry was surprised that such small fish could swim so fast.

The next day and every day after that Henry looked at his guppies the first thing in the morning. When he came home from school he looked at his guppies before he went into the kitchen for something to eat. His fish grew and grew. As the weeks passed the big guppies had more little guppies. The little guppies grew up to be big guppies and had little guppies of their own. Henry had hundreds of guppies. He couldn't find any more pickle jars so he started using his mother's quart fruit jars. He couldn't keep many fish in a quart of water.

Henry had jars on his dresser. He had them on the table by his bed. He put jars on the floor all around the edge of his room. When he had one row of jars all the way around the floor, he started another row.

"Goodness, Henry," his mother said, "pretty soon you won't be able to walk in here."

"If you keep all your guppies," said his



father, "by the end of the year you'll have over a million fish in your bedroom!"

"Golly!" said Henry. "A million fish in my bedroom!" Wouldn't that be something to tell the kids at school!



Henry was glad when summer vacation started. It took him so long to feed his fish that he no longer had time to play with the other children on Klickitat Street. He spent all his allowance on fish food, snails, and plants for his jars. He slept with his windows shut if he thought the night were going to be cold. He wasn't going to have his fish getting sick if he could help it.

All day long the boys and girls in the neighborhood rang the doorbell and asked to see Henry's fish.

Finally his mother said, "Henry, this can't go on. You must get rid of some of those fish. You'll have to give them to your friends."

Henry liked each fish so much he couldn't decide which one he liked best. They were all so lively, swimming around in their fruit jars. Henry didn't see how he could part with any of them, but now that

he was on the third row of jars around his room, he decided to try. He started asking his friends in the neighborhood if they would like to have some fish.

Scooter didn't think he had time to take care of fish. He delivered the *Shopping News* two days a week.

Mary Jane said her mother wouldn't let her have any fish. Mary Jane's mother was very particular.

Robert said he would rather come over and look at Henry's fish than take care of guppies of his own.

Finally Beezus said she would take one fish. Beezus's real name was Beatrice, but her little sister Ramona called her Beezus and now everyone else did, too. Beezus and Ramona already had a cat, three white rats, and a turtle, so one fish wouldn't make much difference. It took Henry a long time to decide which guppy to give her.

Then one morning Mrs. Huggins came home from the Supermarket with three lugs of apricots in the backseat of the car. When Henry helped her carry them into the house, she said, "Henry, run down to the basement and bring up about twenty quart jars. These apricots are so ripe I want to start canning them right away."

Henry went down to the basement. He did not come back with twenty quart jars. He came back with four. "These are all I could find, Mom," he said.

"Oh, dear, and one of them has a crack." Mrs. Huggins looked at the three lugs of apricots. Then she looked at Henry. "Henry," she said, and he knew from the way she said it she meant whatever she was going to say, "go to your room and bring me seventeen quart jars. And don't bring me any jars with guppies in them, either."

"Yes, Mom," said Henry in a meek

voice. He went into his room and looked at the jars of guppies. He guessed he did have too many fish. But they were such nice fish! He got down on his hands and knees to look at his pets.

"Henry!" his mother called. "I am starting to pit the apricots. You'll have to hurry!"

"OK." Henry took his net and started catching the smallest guppies. The only thing he could do was to move them in with the other fish. He hated to do it, because the fish book said they shouldn't be crowded. When the guppies were moved, he carried the jars into the kitchen and poured the water down the sink.

"I'm sorry, Henry," his mother said, "but after all, I did tell you some time ago that you couldn't go on putting guppies in fruit jars."

"I know, Mom. I guess I'll have to think

of something else." It took Henry the rest of the morning to feed his fish. He had to put the tiniest pinch of the finest fish food into each jar. He could hear Robert and Beezus playing cowboy in the vacant lot. Ribsy trotted into his room, watched him a few minutes, and then went outdoors. Henry began to wish he were outdoors, too, but he couldn't let his little fish go hungry.

Late that afternoon Mrs. Huggins drove downtown to pick up Henry's father after work. When they returned, Henry saw his father carrying more lugs of apricots into the kitchen. He had a feeling he knew what was coming next.

It came.

"Henry," his mother said, "I am afraid I'll have to ask you for some more fruit jars."

Henry sighed. "I guess I'll have to double them up some more." He started

to go to his room and then turned back. "Say, Mom, are you going to can anything besides apricots this year?"

"Yes, tomatoes and pears. And I thought we might go out to Mount Hood and pick huckleberries. You like huckleberry pie during the winter, don't you?"

Henry certainly did like huckleberry pie. He liked it any time of year. He went to his room and moved more of his guppies. Tomatoes, pears, and huckleberries. He could see that his mother would need all her fruit jars before the summer was over. That would leave him his original bowl and the gallon pickle jar.

"Hey, Mom," he yelled. "Are you going to make dill pickles, too?"

"Yes, Henry."

There went the pickle jar. By the end of the summer Henry would have to move the hundreds of fish he had now, and goodness

knows how many more, back into the bowl. There would be so many fish there wouldn't be room for any water.

That settled it. Henry decided he would have to get rid of all his guppies. He hated to do it, but if he kept even two he would soon be right back where he was now. It would be nice to have time to play outdoors again. Henry made up his mind to take every one of his fish back to the Lucky Dog Pet Shop. Maybe Mr. Pennycuff could have another sale.

Henry was chasing a guppy with the net when his father came into the room. He told his father what he planned to do. "I sure hate to do it," he mourned, "but I can't keep a million guppies in my bedroom." He looked sorrowfully at his fish.

"I know, Henry. I hate to see the fish go, too, but they're getting out of hand. I'll tell you what to do. Catch all the guppies and



put them into the pickle jar. It won't hurt them to be crowded for a little while. Right after supper I'll run you down to the pet shop in the car."

Henry sadly packed up his fish, and after supper he and his father and Ribsby got into the car and drove to the pet shop. Ribsby liked to ride in the car.

"I brought you a lot of guppies," Henry said to Mr. Pennycuff. "I hope you can use them."

"Use them!" exclaimed Mr. Pennycuff. "I certainly can. I haven't had a guppy in this store since the sale. Let's see them."

While Henry unwrapped his pickle jar, his father looked at the tanks of tropical fish along the wall.

"I should say you do have a lot of guppies," said Mr. Pennycuff. "Nice healthy ones, too. You must have taken good care of them." He held the jar up to the light

and looked at it closely. It seethed with gray guppies, rainbow guppies, and baby guppies of all sizes, swimming round and round. "Hmmmm. Let's see. We-e-ell." Mr. Pennycuff continued to stare at the fish.

Henry couldn't understand why he was muttering to himself that way. He had given Mr. Pennycuff the guppies and now he wished he would return the pickle jar so he could go.

"Well, now," said Mr. Pennycuff, "I guess these fish are worth about seven dollars. I can't give it to you in money, but you can pick out seven dollars' worth of anything in the store you want."

Seven dollars! Henry was astounded. Seven dollars' worth of anything in the pet shop! He was rich! He had been so busy thinking about getting rid of the guppies that it had not occurred to him they might

be worth something to Mr. Pennycuff.

"Hey, Dad! Did you hear that? Seven dollars!" Henry shouted.

"I certainly did. You'd better start looking around."

"Take anything you want, sonny. Dog collars, kittens, bird seed. Anything."

Henry tried to decide what he would like. Ribsy had a collar and leash and a dish, so he didn't need anything. He looked at the kittens. The sign read, "Kittens. One dollar each." They were cute, but Henry decided he didn't want seven dollars' worth of kittens. Ribsy would chase them.

"You don't have any skunks on sale for seven dollars?" he asked hopefully.

"No, I haven't had any skunks for a long time."

"I'm glad to hear that," said Mr. Huggins. Henry looked at the tropical fish. Then he looked all around the store and came



back to the tropical fish again. He stopped to watch a little catfish busily digging in the sand. Suddenly Henry knew that the only thing in the store he really wanted was more fish.

“Could I keep a catfish in my fishbowl?” he asked Mr. Pennycuff.

“No, sonny, they have to be kept in warm water. They need an electric heater and a thermostat in the water to keep the water the right temperature.” He held up two long glass tubes. One looked as if it were filled with sand and the other with wires. “See, this is what I mean. They fit into the corners of an aquarium like this and keep the water warm all the time.” He fitted them into the corner of a little tank on a table.

“How much does that cost?”

“The tank is three dollars and the heater and thermostat come to four. That makes seven dollars.”

Henry was disappointed. "I wouldn't have any money left for a catfish and the only thing I really want is more fish."

"You know, Henry, I hoped you'd say that," answered his father. "I hated to see those guppies go as much as you did. If you buy the tank and heater and thermostat, I'll buy the fish."

"Gee, Dad, that's swell! Let's get a little catfish!" Then Henry thought of something. "Do catfish have as many babies as guppies?" he asked Mr. Pennycuff.

"Oh my, no. Catfish rarely have babies when they're kept in tanks. They mostly have them when they live outdoors in ponds and rivers."

"Swell!" said Henry. "That's the kind of fish we want. Won't Mom be surprised!"