



6-2021

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Recommended Citation

Hedrick, Sarah (2021) "To Touch the Heavens: A Short Story," *Swiss American Historical Society Review*. Vol. 57 : No. 2 , Article 4.

Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol57/iss2/4

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To Touch the Heavens:

A Short Story

by Sarah Hedrick

A light Swiss breeze blew through Heidi's curly blonde hair as she and her grandfather Adolph walked along the mountain path. They had been walking up the mountainside for several hours and were nearing the top. Heidi couldn't wait to get to the mountaintop; it was the one part of the mountain that she had never been to before. Her grandfather told her that when you were at the top, you're up so high that you can almost reach up and touch the heavens. However, the trek was quite long, and Heidi had never gone that far up the mountain before.

She looked over at her grandfather; she could tell that he was getting tired and worn out. Although he had walked up to the mountaintop many times before, it had been many years since he had done it and he wasn't as young as he used to be. Heidi could tell that he was starting to have second thoughts about going that far up the mountain. Adolph looked down at his granddaughter, "Heidi, are you sure you still want to go to the top of the mountain?"

It wasn't that he didn't want to take her to the mountaintop; after all, it was his idea. Heidi had been feeling a little depressed lately and he thought that taking her to the top of the mountain would cheer her up. But since it had been so long since he had walked that far up the mountain and that Heidi has never been there before, he was beginning to wonder if it was such a good idea to take her. However, he also knew how stubborn she could be and knew that it would be dif-

difficult to change her mind. Heidi looked up at her grandfather, “Yes, of course I do,” she replied.

Heidi wanted to get to the top of the mountain more than anything; from what her grandfather told her, the view was very beautiful. But the beauty at the top wasn’t the real reason why she wanted to get there; she was hoping that by being at a height where she could touch the heavens, she will also be able to talk to her deceased parents. The reason she had been so depressed lately was because she was missing them. Although she loved her grandfather and living in the Swiss mountains with him, she couldn’t help but miss her parents. After all, she was very young when they passed and barely knew them. It was this reason why Heidi wanted so much to get to the mountaintop. After her grandfather told her that she would be able to touch the heavens, she thought that it would be the perfect opportunity to talk to her parents.

Adolph looked into Heidi’s brown eyes; he could tell that she wanted to continue their hike up to the mountaintop. He sighed and smiled at her, “Okay Heidi. We’ll hike to the top.”

He looked up the elevated path that was ahead of them, “It looks like we’re almost there anyway.”

Heidi’s eyes widened with joy; she immediately started running up the path to the top of the mountain. Adolph watched as she ran and immediately tried to catch up, “Hold on a minute,” he chuckled. “Slow down.”

But Heidi didn’t stop; she wanted so much to get to the top that she didn’t want to stop and wait. She kept running and running until she was at the top of the mountain. She looked up and saw the open clear blue sky with a few small clouds floating by. She then looked around the mountaintop and realized that the whole area was completely open and clear with no trees around. It was almost as if it was the borderline between the mountains and heaven. Heidi slowly walked over to the edge and looked down at the Swiss valley below; it was just as beautiful as the sky above. She could see all of the Swiss

countryside in the valley below and the other mountains surrounding it. The mountaintop, the view of the open sky, and the view of the valley below was everything that her grandfather had told her. It was almost as if she was getting a small glimpse of what heaven was like. “Wow,” she said in awe.

Suddenly, a cool gentle breeze blew across the mountain top and across Heidi’s face. Unlike the wind that blew through her hair on her way up the mountain, this breeze was different; the wind didn’t feel like wind at all. Instead, it felt more like a gentle touch of a hand caressing her face. As the wind blew across her face, she heard something; it almost sounded like a quiet voice was whispering to her. “Heidi,” whispered the voice.

In that moment, Heidi felt a sudden presence that she had never felt before. She felt as if there was someone else on the mountaintop with her. At first, Heidi thought that it was her grandfather calling out to her; she turned around to see if he was there. “Grandfather,” she asked.

He wasn’t there; he must’ve still been walking up the path to the top of the mountain. But if her grandfather wasn’t talking to her, then who was? As she was thinking this, she heard another voice whispering her name; this time, it was different. While the first voice sounded like a man (which is why she thought it was her grandfather was talking to her), the second voice sounded like a woman. “Heidi,” whispered the voice.

Heidi thought for a moment, trying to process who those voices could be. After thinking for a few minutes, she realized that the voices could only be one thing: she was hearing the voices of her parents. She paused for a moment to see if she could hear the whispers again; there was complete silence. However, even though she couldn’t see them or hear them, she felt as if they were right there with her. “Hi, Mom. Hi, Dad,” said Heidi. “It’s me, Heidi. How have you been? I’ve been thinking about you a lot lately. I really miss you.”

As Heidi was talking, Adolph was walking up the path to the

mountaintop; and when he reached the top, he could hear her talking to someone. At first, he didn't know who she could be talking to. He looked around the mountain's peak to see if he could see anyone: there wasn't anyone around. Suddenly, he realized who she was talking to: she was talking to her mother and father. "I'm living with my grandfather now in the mountains now," said Heidi. "It's been wonderful. I've made some new friends with a girl that I met named Klara and her father Mr. Sesemann. I think you'd really like them."

Adolph smiled and started to walk over to where his granddaughter was standing. "I'm glad I finally got to talk to you," said Heidi. "I hope you're enjoying it up there in heaven, and I hope I'll get to see you face to face one day. Goodbye."

In that moment, a sudden peace came over Heidi; she no longer felt depressed or alone. She stood at the edge of the mountaintop and gazed at Swiss countryside below. As she was doing this, her grandfather stood beside her and wrapped his arm around her. He was happy to see Heidi feeling better, and she did. She now knew that even if she couldn't see her parents, they were always with her and watching over her in heaven.

~ *Bryan College*