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Harry's Composition

Mary Graham Bonner

Harry was considered something of a hero at his school — the kind of boy other boys look up to. So when he walked up onto the stage at the rehearsal for the Washington's Birthday entertainment, everyone was surprised to see his legs shaking.

He began to recite. He faltered. He stopped.

And then Harry — Harry of all people — burst into tears.

The room went very quiet. The other children looked at him with a kind of helpless pity. What on earth was wrong?

"Teacher," he finally said, through the tears he was clearly furious at himself for crying, "I didn't write that composition. I cheated. I copied it out of an old book I found. I am not worthy to recite on Washington's Birthday."



He rushed from the platform, sat down at his desk, put his head in his hands, and cried and cried.

There was a long silence.

"Harry," said the teacher at last, "you have done something very much in the spirit of George Washington's Birthday. You couldn't act a lie. You told the truth even when it cost you something real." She paused. "You will still recite the composition — but you will give the name of the person who actually wrote it."

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