

Oh no! Henry has ...

CHOCOLATE FEVER

a novel

Robert Kimmel Smith



Chapter 1

Meet Henry Green

THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE who say that Henry Green wasn't really born, but was hatched, fully grown, from a chocolate bean.

Can you believe that?

Anyway, this particular Henry Green we are speaking of *was* really born—not hatched—and had a wonderful mom and dad in the bargain. His father was tall and lean and wore eyeglasses, except when he was sleeping or in the shower. Mama Green, whose name was Enid, was a short, slim woman with blue-gray eyes and a tiny mouth

that always seemed to be on the verge of a smile.

They all lived in an apartment in the middle of the city, along with Henry's older brother and sister. Mark Green was ten and tall and very good to Henry. Except when they would argue, which was often, and then he would hit Henry on the head with anything that was handy, which sometimes was hard. But mostly Mark was fun to be with and only got angry when Henry called him Marco Polo. Mark didn't like that, and who could blame him?

Henry's sister was very, very old. Almost fourteen. She didn't ever argue with Henry or Mark. In fact, she hardly talked to them at all because she was so old and wise and almost grown up. Her name was Elizabeth.

The other morning, which was a schoolday at the end of the week called Friday, Henry, Mark, and Elizabeth were at the table in the dining room having breakfast. Mark was eating fried eggs. Elizabeth was quietly chewing on her usual breakfast of buttery toast and milk. And Henry was midway through his usual breakfast, too. Chocolate cake, a bowl of cocoa-crispy cereal and

milk (with chocolate syrup in the milk to make it more chocolatey), washed down by a big glass of chocolate milk and five or six chocolate cookies. Sometimes, when it was left over from the night before, Henry would have chocolate pudding, too. And on Sunday mornings he usually had chocolate ice cream.

The truth was that Henry was in love with chocolate. And chocolate seemed to love him.

It didn't make him fat. (He was a little on the thin side, in fact.)

It didn't hurt his teeth. (He'd never had a cavity in his life.)

It didn't stunt his growth. (He was just about average height, perhaps even a little tall for his age.)

It didn't harm his skin, which had always been clear and fair.

But most of all, it never, never gave him a bellyache.

And so his parents, perhaps being not as wise as they were kind, let Henry have as much chocolate as he liked.

Henry has chocolate spots!

Henry loves chocolate so much, it practically runs through his veins. Chocolate cake, chocolate cereal, chocolate syrup, chocolate milk, and chocolate cookies—and that's just breakfast! Still, it comes as a shock when he suddenly breaks out in chocolaty brown spots and is diagnosed with . . . Chocolate Fever. Rather than be poked and prodded by doctors, Henry runs away, starting the adventure of a lifetime. But at the end of it all, the question remains: Is there a cure for Chocolate Fever?



"Henry's absolutely freaky over chocolate, loco over cocoa. He can't get enough, until—aaarrrrgh! . . . It's (gulp) Chocolate Fever."

—New York Times Book Review

"It's all quite preposterous and lots of laughs." *—Publishers Weekly*

"Chocolate lovers will identify with Henry Green who eats chocolate wherever and however he wants. . . . Embedded in this tale are lessons in courage, caring, moderation, and prejudice." *—School Library Journal*



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ISBN 0-14-240595-7



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