

**EVANGELINE, A
TALE OF ACADIE,
PP. 1-101**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649578481

Evangeline, a Tale of Acadie, pp. 1-101 by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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EVANGELINE

A TALE OF ACADIE

BY

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW



BOSTON:
JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY,
LATE TICKNOR & FIELDS, AND FIELDS, OSGOOD, & CO.

1875.

EVANGELINE

THIS is the forest primeval. The murmuring
pines and the hemlocks,
Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indis-
tinct in the twilight,
Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and pro-
phetic,
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on
their bosoms.
Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neigh-
boring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the
wail of the forest.

This is the forest primeval ; but where are the
hearts that beneath it
Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the wood-
land the voice of the huntsman ?
Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of
Acadian farmers, —
Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water
the woodlands,

Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an
image of heaven?
Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers
forever departed!
Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty
blasts of October
Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle
them far o'er the ocean.
Naught but tradition remains of the beautiful vil-
lage of Grand-Pré.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes, and en-
dures, and is patient,
Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of
woman's devotion,
List to the mournful tradition still sung by the
pines of the forest;
List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home of the
happy.

PART THE FIRST

I.

IN the Acadian land, on the shores of the Basin
of Minas,
Distant, secluded, still, the little village of Grand-
Pré
Lay in the fruitful valley. Vast meadows stretched
to the eastward,
Giving the village its name, and pasture to flocks
without number.
Dikes, that the hands of the farmers had raised
with labor incessant,
Shut out the turbulent tides; but at stated sea-
sons the flood-gates
Opened, and welcomed the sea to wander at will
o'er the meadows.
West and south there were fields of flax, and
orchards and cornfields
Spreading afar and unfenced o'er the plain; and
away to the northward
Blomidon rose, and the forests old, and aloft on
the mountains

Sea-fogs pitched their tents, and mists from the
mighty Atlantic
Looked on the happy valley, but ne'er from their
station descended.
There, in the midst of its farms, reposed the Aca-
dian village.
Strongly built were the houses, with frames of oak
and of chestnut,
Such as the peasants of Normandy built in the
reign of the Henries.
Thatched were the roofs, with dormer-windows,
and gables projecting
Over the basement below, protected and shaded
the door-way.
There in the tranquil evenings of summer, when
brightly the sunset
Lighted the village street, and gilded the vanes
on the chimneys,
Matrons and maidens sat in snow-white caps and
in kirtles
Scarlet and blue and green, with distaffs spinning
the golden
Flax for the gossiping looms, whose noisy shuttles
within doors
Mingled their sound with the whirl of the wheels
and the songs of the maidens.
Solemnly down the street came the parish priest,
and the children
Paused in their play to kiss the hand he extended
to bless them.

Reverend walked he among them; and up rose
matrons and maidens,
Hailing his slow approach with words of affection-
ate welcome.
Then came the laborers home from the field, and
serenely the sun sank
Down to his rest, and twilight prevailed. Anon
from the belfry
Softly the Angelus sounded, and over the roofs of
the village
Columns of pale blue smoke, like clouds of incense
ascending,
Rose from a hundred hearths, the homes of peace
and contentment.
Thus dwelt together in love these simple Acadian
farmers,—
Dwelt in the love of God and of man. Alike
were they free from
Fear, that reigns with the tyrant, and envy, the
* vice of republics.
Neither locks had they to their doors, nor bars to
* their windows;
But their dwellings were open as day and the
hearts of the owners;
There the richest was poor, and the poorest lived
in abundance.

Somewhat apart from the village, and nearer
the Basin of Minas,

Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest farmer of
Grand-Pré,
Dwelt on his goodly acres ; and with him, direct-
ing his household,
Gentle Evangeline lived, his child, and the pride
of the village.
Stalworth and stately in form was the man of sev-
enty winters ;
Heartly and hale was he, an oak that is covered
with snow flakes ;
White as the snow were his locks, and his cheeks
as brown as the oak-leaves.
Fair was she to behold, that maiden of seventecn
summers.
Black were her eyes as the berry that grows on
the thorn by the wayside,
Black, yet how softly they gleamed beneath the
brown shade of her tresses !
Sweet was her breath as the breath of kine that
feed in the meadows.
When in the harvest heat she bore to the reapers
at noontide
Flagons of home-brewed ale, ah ! fair in sooth was
the maiden.
Fairer was she when, on Sunday morn, while the
bell from its turret
Sprinkled with holy sounds the air, as the priest
with his hyssop
Sprinkles the congregation, and scatters blessings
upon them,