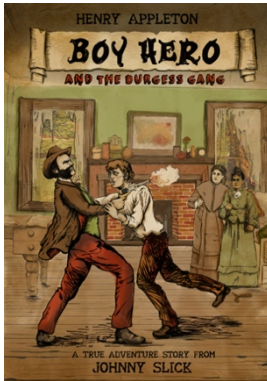


# Henry Appleton, Boy Hero and the Burgess Gang

## Synopsis



Bank robbers ... classroom bullies ... highwaymen ... a rampaging bull. The challenges Henry Appleton faces, as he struggles to stand up for what he believes in, make this a classic 'cowboy' yarn. It takes place not in the American West but in the rough-and-tumble world of Aotearoa New Zealand in the 1860s.

The book is written by John Evan Harris in the voice of the self-acclaimed American dime novelist Johnny Slick – who himself was saved by Henry's quick thinking and bravery.



*Henry Appleton, Boy Hero* is a prequel to Henry's encounters with the Burgess gang, told by John Evan Harris in his book *The Physician's Gun*.



Although Henry dreams of having his own rifle and becoming a gunslinger like Wild Bill Hickok, he is in most ways just an ordinary kid who's not looking for trouble. Trouble finds him.

He is barely eleven when he helps to capture bank robber Dead Eye Dick, and the town is quick to call him a 'boy hero'. As a reward, the bank gives him a pony – Duke.

Henry admires his adoptive father William, who went to the goldfields to seek his fortune and never returned. When Henry sets off to find his father, he runs into Dead Eye Dick, who has escaped from prison. But his beloved horse Duke saves the day: Henry whistles, and Duke stops in his tracks. The bank robber goes flying over the horse's head and is taken back to prison.





Henry, inspired by his father's words, continues to "do the right thing" – whatever the cost. In class he stands up to the school bully – and is knocked on the ground.

Henry's biggest challenge is yet to come – when he finds himself face-to-face with the murderous Richard Burgess gang. They are on their way to Nelson, where they plan to rob a bank. They hide up in the dark hills above the township, very near where

Henry and his mother run a small farm.



On his way to town, Henry is ambushed by Richard Burgess himself, who not only claims to be his real father, but invites him to join the gang. Burgess makes the gang sound romantic, just like Robin Hood. But they are really thieves and ruthless killers. Will Henry have the courage to 'do the right thing'?



Henry defies the gang, who take him hostage. He is shot at and injured, but manages to escape and rescue his mother and girlfriend who have been taken captive by the gang.. The four highwaymen are captured and tried, and Richard Burgess and two of his gang are hung.

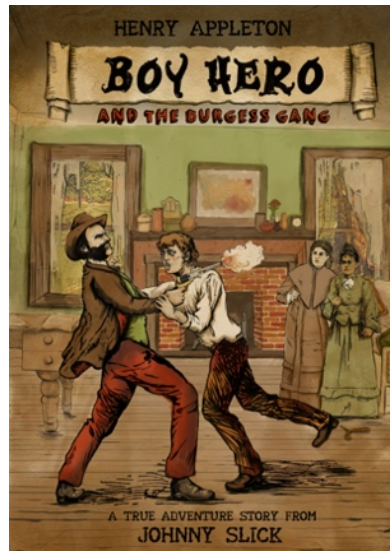


Henry's adventures are not over. He is there when a huge bullock charges at the dime novelist Johnny Slick, and Henry valiantly pushes the writer out of the way to safety.



Slick declares Henry a hero – again – and promises to write a book about his exploits: *Henry Appleton Boy Hero and the Burgess Gang*.

\* Line drawings by Charles Cumming



## ***Henry Appleton, Boy Hero and the Burgess Gang***

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