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STORY LADY'S

CHRISTMAS STORIES



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CHRISTMAS STORIES



THE "STORY LADY" SERIES

CHRISTMAS STORIES

BY
GEORGENE FAULKNER
"THE STORY LADY"

ILLUSTRATED BY
FREDERIC RICHARDSON



DAUGHADAY AND COMPANY
CHICAGO

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SEP 14 1916

TO MY FATHER

A GENEROUS SANTA CLAUS TO HIS LARGE
FAMILY OF CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN
WHO HAS HELPED EACH OF US THROUGH HIS
OWN SPIRIT OF SELF-SACRIFICE AND SERVICE
TO A FINER APPRECIATION OF THE TRUE
MEANING OF CHRISTMAS.

FOREWORD

WE are all children, young and old, at Christmas time. We love to talk and think about Santa Claus and the gifts which he will bring to us, and we like to plan how we may play Santa Claus and make some one else happy. Santa Claus embodies this spirit of self-sacrifice and service and so we will enjoy going in our dreams on "A Visit to Santa Claus Land." And what fun we will have when we join with the fairies and dear Mrs. Santa Claus and trim "A Christmas Tree for Santa Claus." And then this story of "Squeaky and the Scare-box"—you know such a thing might really truly happen on your own tree, so look out when you open *your* "Jack-in-the-box." "The Legend of Saint Nicholas" and his long silken purses will help you to understand our custom of hanging up our stockings to receive gifts. And this good Bishop doing his deeds of love in the night certainly must have been like our Santa Claus. The

FOREWORD

last story tells of the true Christmas spirit and "The Gift of Love" which God gave to the world when Christ was born.

And so may this book of "Christmas Stories," coming right into your home, bring to you a message of Christmas Cheer, with a Merry Christmas to all,

From your Story Lady,

GEORGENE FAULKNER.



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*The illustrations are from
original paintings by
Frederic Richardson*

A VISIT TO
SANTA CLAUS
LAND



A VISIT TO SANTA CLAUS LAND



ONCE upon a time there were two children, a little boy named Willie and a little girl named Annie. Now, they could hardly wait for Santa Claus to visit them, so every day they would say to their mother, "Oh, Mother, how many days until Christmas? Must we wait a whole month, Mother? Twenty days more, ten days more, only five days more,—how slowly the days drag on, Mother!"

Now, the busy mother felt the time slip by all too rapidly, but the children counted the

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days on the calendar and grew more and more impatient each day. At last they shouted in glee, "Santa Claus will visit us to-night, and to-morrow is Merry Christmas!"

They borrowed the longest, strongest stockings which they could find, and when their mother came to tuck them snugly in bed and to kiss them good-night, Willie said, "Do you know, Mother, I'm going to prop my eyelids wide open and watch all night for Santa Claus."

"So am I," said Annie, "and when he comes down the chimney, we will ask him where he gets all the toys."

"Oh, no, you must go right to sleep and he will come all the faster," answered the mother, as she turned out the lights and left the nursery.

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After she had gone downstairs, Willie whispered to Annie, "Say, Annie, are you awake?"

"Yes, I am, but I'm getting so sleepy I wish he would hurry and come right now. Let's sing our Christmas carols for him." And so the two children sang all the songs they knew.

"My, it does seem so long to wait. I am most asleep," said Willie, with a big yawn. "I tell you, we can take turns—you watch for him awhile, Annie, and then I shall." After a time Annie called out, "Willie, I'm so sleepy; it's your turn to watch." But she received no answer.

The next thing they knew, Annie and Willie were away up in the North Polè country, with snow and ice around them on all sides, and right in front of them stood a high ice-

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wall. "How I wish we could go through this wall—" said Willie, and just as he said this the ice seemed to open and there was a great gateway leading into the strangest garden that you ever heard of in all your life. It was a garden all of toys, and Annie and Willie could hardly believe their eyes as they saw the wonders about them. Hanging right over the wall there appeared to be something growing like morning-glories. When they looked again the children saw that they were not morning-glories at all, but small, toy talking-machines, while on a trumpet-vine nearby they saw growing, like flowers, real toy trumpets. Willie picked a trumpet at once and played on it: "Toot-toot-toot-toot-too-oo-o."

"Oh, you must not touch the toys, Willie," gasped poor Annie in fright. "We don't know who owns this garden."

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Just then the children saw the gardener of this wonderful land of toys. He was the merriest old man, dressed all in red, and his coat and hat were trimmed with ermine. His hair and beard were as white as the snow and his cheeks were like red, rosy apples, while his eyes twinkled like stars. The children knew who this gardener was at once, you may be sure. Why, it was Santa Claus, of course! He was cutting down a crop of whistles with his sickle. He had a large, red sack at his side and smaller bags nearby, and he was so happy that he sang as he worked:

“In my wonderful garden of toys
Grows a crop for the good girls and boys.
Dolls, cannon, and drums,
Candy cake, sugar plums—
All grow in my garden of toys.”

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He was just ready to make up another verse when he spied the two children. "Oh, ho, ho, ho!" he laughed merrily, "how did you two children come here?"

"Please, Mr. Santa Claus," said Willie shyly, "we were waiting for you to visit us and the next thing we knew we were in this garden. We don't know how we came here, but, now that we are here, may we not help you to pick some toys?"

"Indeed, you may," said Santa Claus. "I need two such helpers. I was just wondering how I could gather all these toys in time for to-morrow. Willie, will you please go over to the garden-bed in the corner and pull up some tops?"

"Pull up some tops!" echoed Willie in amazement. But he took a red sack and went to the garden and began to pull up

A VISIT TO SANTA CLAUS LAND

toy tops. There were large tops growing like turnips and little tops growing like beets and radishes. There were all kinds of tops; some would humm-humm-humm-m-m and make music while Willie pulled them up. Next, Willie climbed a tree and began to pick red marbles growing just like cherries; and he found purple and blue marbles growing on a trellis, just like grapes—so he filled many small bags with marbles. He also climbed other trees where he thought he saw apples and oranges growing, but, when he came near them, he found different-colored balls—so he picked a bag of balls for Santa.

‘Oh, Santa, may I help too?’ asked Annie.

“Indeed you may, my child,” he answered. “How should you like to pick dollies?” So all this time Annie was busy getting him dollies, and she was very happy.

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“You dear, dear dollies!” Annie said, as she hugged each one in turn. “How happy all the little girls will be when they find these dollies Christmas morning!” There were large dolls with the cutest bonnets on their heads, growing just like roses, and other dollies with the dearest pointed hats, growing up like tall holly-hocks. And then there were tiny dollies like pansies turning their pretty little faces up toward Annie.

Presently Santa Claus began to water the grass and suddenly every blade of grass was a tiny tin soldier with his musket erectly held, while soldiers' tents, like mushrooms, sprang up all around. War-ships, sail-boats, steam-boats, motor-boats, row-boats and canoes were all out on a lake nearby, but they could never sink, for the lake was a large looking-glass, and fishes, ducks and

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swans were swimming on looking-glass streams. The children rushed from one garden to another and saw so many things to pick that they were kept very busy helping Santa Claus.

“Oh, see those pumpkins and squashes over there on those vines!” exclaimed Willie, but when he went to pick them he found drums, large and small, and foot-balls and basket-balls lying on the ground, like melons and pumpkins turned brown.

“Whee-ee-ee-ee! Isn't this jolly! See those funny brown leaves blowing in the wind,” called Annie. “They are all sizes and shapes.” When the children came near to pick them, they found no leaves at all, but brown Teddy-bears with their arms and feet out-stretched. The children hugged them in their arms and the Teddy-bears gave little squeaks of glee,

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for they were so glad to be gathered in with this harvest of toys.

Suddenly, overhead, the children heard a whirr-whirr-whirring noise, and when they looked up it seemed as if great swarms of dragon-flies and butterflies were hovering over them. "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Santa Claus, as he watched the surprised children. "Those are new toys; they only lately have come to my land—but, here, take these butterfly nets and try to catch a few of them." And when Annie and Willie brought these toys down a little nearer, they saw that they were not dragonflies or butterflies, but toy air-ships.

Tiny, toy trains went gliding over steel rails, across switches, under tunnels, over bridges, and stopped at stations, quite like really, truly trains.

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“How should you like to see my farm?” asked Santa Claus. And the next thing Annie and Willie knew they were in a toyland farm-yard. Houses, fences and barns with stalls for horses and cows, and everything as complete as a real farm. Horses rocked to and fro or rolled about on wheels; toy lambs, so woolly and white, said, “Baa-baa-baa,” when their heads were turned to one side.

There was also a menagerie of wild animals nearby. Elephants and tigers, lions and monkeys—more animals than you can tell about—were there, and they looked so real that at first Annie felt like running to hide behind Santa Claus. Then Santa Claus led them through toy villages and they really felt like giants when they looked down on all the dolls’ houses and different stores, toy

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theatres, toy post-offices, toy grocery stores, meat markets, and in all these stores were dolls for clerks and dolls for customers.

Then Santa Claus took them far away from the villages, out through the orchard where the sugar-plum trees were growing, and after they had filled many bags with candy he led them out to the Christmas-tree forest. Here they found Christmas trees growing with gold and silver tinsel and hung with glass balls and chains, while tiny, colored lights were twinkling through the branches. Santa Claus had to gather these trees and pack them with great care.

The next thing the children knew, Santa Claus had taken them right into his home. There they saw a dear old lady with snow-white hair who was sewing on some dolls' clothes. (She was dressing some of the

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dollies that had sprung up without any clothes.) It was Mrs. Santa Claus, of course, and as she hugged and kissed the children she said to Santa Claus, "The dears, where did you find them?"

"Out in the garden," answered Santa Claus. "I don't know how they came here, but they are excellent helpers. They have been helping me to gather my toys. I shall soon be ready now, after I do a little more work in my shop. You know, my dear, I must first test my winding toys, for that clock-work machinery does break so easily."

As he talked, Santa Claus took off his cap and coat, rolled up his sleeves and went right to work. He wound and tested each toy, and Willie helped him by handing him the keys for each one. There was a *honk-honk-honk*, a *toot-toot-toot*, a *chug, chug*,

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chug, and a *clang, clang, clang*, as automobiles, boats, engines, fire-engines and all kinds of mechanical toys went running about the shop like mad. Next Santa was working with his saw and plane, his hammer and nails, and with a rap and a tap he finished the roof of a doll's house.

Mrs. Santa had dressed all the dolls and furnished the dolls' houses. "What a cute little kitchen!" exclaimed Annie. "Oh, Willie, do you see this dining-room and the cunning parlor and this little bed-room? How I should love to play dolls in this house!" Then Annie turned to Mrs. Santa Claus and said, "May I not help you? I could thread your needles or help in some way."

"Why, so you may, my dear," answered Mrs. Santa Claus. "My eyes are getting

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old and if you will thread my needles it will be a great help." So Annie threaded needles and helped Mrs. Santa Claus to dress the last doll and then to pack all the clothes in a new doll's trunk.

Santa Claus sat at his desk and finished writing a story and drawing the last pictures when suddenly the clock struck, Ding-dong-ding. Twelve times it struck and Mrs. Santa Claus said, "It is time you were up and away, sir." She helped Santa Claus into his big cloak and he pulled on his high boots and his warm gloves and pulled his cap down over his ears.

Just then the reindeer were heard prancing and pawing outside, impatient to be off and away. Santa Claus bundled his big pack of toys into his sleigh and put in all his Christmas trees. He kissed Mrs. Santa on

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both cheeks, and with a big smack on the lips called out, "Good-by, Mother," and, picking up Annie and Willie as if they were live dolls, tucked one under each arm and dashed out to the magic sleigh. They seemed fairly to fly through the air, and the moon and the stars seemed to dance in the sky as they went on faster and faster. Then they came down nearer and nearer to earth where the lights in the great city gleamed like fire-flies far below.

The next thing Annie and Willie knew, they were on the roof of their own home. The next thing they knew, they were down, down the chimney and—there they were right in their own, little beds! The sun-light was streaming into their eyes and their mother was calling, "Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas, little sleepy heads!"

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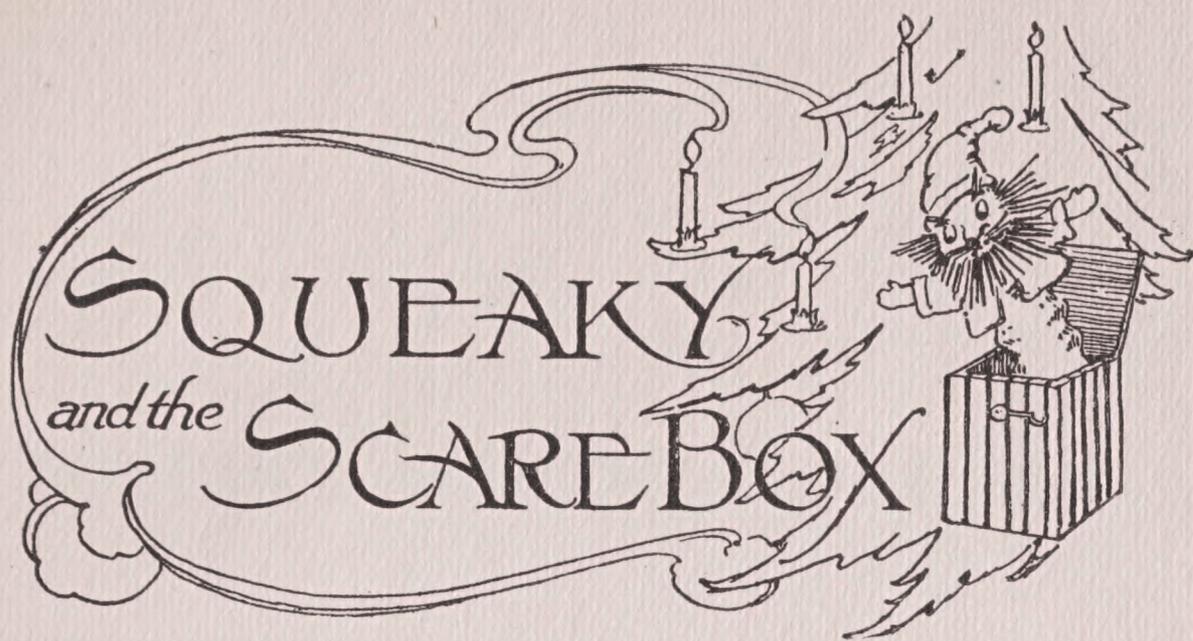
“Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!” they both shouted, as they bounced out of bed and rushed for their stockings which were fairly bulging with toys, and Annie was soon hugging and kissing a new dolly while Willie was blowing a new trumpet. In the other room stood a large Christmas tree which had come from the Christmas-tree forest.

“Oh, we know where these toys came from,” said Willie. “They came from the garden of toys, for we visited Santa Claus Land last night.”

Now, to-night, when you go to bed, close your eyes tightly and go to sleep and I am sure you too can pay a visit to Santa Claus Land.

Merry Christmas!





SQUEAKY
and the SCARE BOX

SQUEAKY AND THE SCARE BOX



ONCE upon a time there lived in a hole in the pantry wall a family of mice. There was a father mouse and a mother mouse and three little baby mice. They were called the "Velvet family," because their fur looked like soft, gray velvet.

One little mouse was named Sharpeyes (only they nicknamed him "Sharpy") because his eyes were so sharp and bright. He could see everything, even in the darkest closets and holes. One was named Sniffy, because he could sniff and smell anything

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good to eat, wherever it might be hidden. And the tiniest little mouse was named Squeaky, because he had such a squeaky, shrill little voice. He was constantly singing, "Ee-ee-ee."

Now the mother-mouse was very wise, and she had taught her babies to scamper and hide whenever they saw the old cat tiptoeing about. The mother-mouse would say, "Beware of the cat!" and the little mice would run so quickly that although Mrs. Puss did not even mew or purr when she walked through the pantry, she never had been able to catch any one of the Velvet family. But many of their little cousins and other relatives had been caught by the old cat. So the little mice obeyed their mother and always hid when the cat was near.

The mother-mouse also warned her babies

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to beware of the trap. She said, "I know, Sniffy, you will smell the cheese, and Sharpy will peer into the queer, little, round house and see the cheese hanging there, and Squeaky will call to you all to come in and get a bite, but if you do not heed my words you will be caught with cruel springs and wires and choked to death. So mind what I tell you and do not eat any cheese unless I am with you."

And the little mice answered, "Ee-ee-ee! Yes, Mother, yes. Ee-ee-ee!" in their little, shrill voices, and they promised to remember to do just what their mother told them.

I could not begin to tell you about all the frolics that those mice had together. But I will tell you about their Christmas party.

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“’Twas the night before Christmas,
And all through the house
Not a creature was stirring,
Not even a mouse.”

The last touches had been put upon the tall Christmas tree standing in the living room. The father and mother had gone upstairs to bed—

“And the children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar plums danced through their heads.”

But, in the hole in the wall, the Velvet family were all wide awake.

“Ee-ee-ee!” squeaked Squeaky, “why can’t we creep into the big room and see the tall Christmas tree? We have heard the children talking about that tree for days, and we have never seen a Christmas tree, so please,

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Mother-Mouse, can't we go out this time and see it?"

"Yes," said Sniffy, "do let us go, Mother-Mouse. Everything has been smelling so good lately, and the children and the cook made long strings of popcorn. I nibbled a little piece that they dropped here on the pantry floor, and it tasted so good."

"Yes," said Sharpeyes, "and I peered out of our hole and saw some candy on a plate and some gingerbread cakes, all ready for the children. Oh, I do want a bite of those good things! Please let us have a Christmas party, Mother-Mouse!"

"Now, don't tease, children; I will ask your father, and if he says it is safe, why, then we shall go."

When the father-mouse heard them, he said, "Well, I will go out first, and look

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carefully about, and then I will let you know if you dare to venture out." So father-mouse crept softly through the pantry. He tiptoed down the long hall and into the living-room, but the old cat was nowhere to be seen.

For you must know, children, the house people were afraid that the cat might brush against the tree and break something, so poor Mrs. Puss had been banished to the coal-bin and was spending her Christmas Eve down in the cellar all alone; and she was howling and yowling because she was so angry.

When the father-mouse could not find the cat, he came back to the pantry and called out the glad tidings, "The coast is clear. come out, children."

Then all the Velvet family came scrambling down from their hole in the wall, their

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whiskers fairly trembling in their eagerness. They crept through the pantry and tip-toed along the great hall and into the living-room where stood the tall Christmas tree; and when they saw the wonderful tree, they were so happy that they squeaked again and again in their joy. Then each mouse took hold of its tail as though it were a long train and, holding it up very carefully, danced and danced in the moonlight. They ran around and around the tree, examining everything.

On the floor they found a wonderful doll's house. "How lovely it would be to live here," they squeaked. They ran up and down the stairs, overturned the chairs, pulled off the bedclothes and climbed into the beds. Then they went into the dining-room and sat down in the tiny chairs, but when they

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found the table was just set with play food, they did not like it, for of course it was not good to eat.

Then Sniffy said, "I smell that good popcorn again; let's climb up into the Christmas tree and get some." So they began to climb up into the tree. They nibbled the popcorn chains; they nibbled the candy canes and the candy hanging in the stocking bags. They found the gingerbread cakes, and each one took a bite.

Suddenly Sharpeyes said, "Come here, I see a mouse! I see a mouse! But he doesn't belong to our furry family at all."

"I should say not," sniffed Sniffy; "he smells so good!"

"Why, he is good to eat!" squeaked Squeaky, and they all began to eat the chocolate mouse.

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Then they found another candy mouse, a nice pink one, and they were so busy eating it that they forgot to watch and listen, until *bang!* suddenly the door was thrown open and the electric lights were turned on. With a squeak of warning, the Velvet family, scrambling and tumbling down through the branches of the tree, scampered pell-mell across the hall, through the pantry and back to their home and safety.

There was the father-mouse, and the mother-mouse, and Sharpeyes, and Sniffy, but where was Squeaky? What had become of poor Squeaky?

Now, as Squeaky tried to climb down the tree, he fell heels over head down, down, down until he was caught in a funny, square box. An ugly looking man with black hair and a black beard seemed to be hopping

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right out of the box, and, when Squeaky saw the lights turned on, he thought it best to hide under the skirts of this queer man. He nestled down and lay very still, hardly breathing. He had been taught never to move when danger was near so he did not wiggle even a whisker. He heard voices. The house people were talking.

“Yes,” said the children’s father, “it would have been a shame to forget this train. I want it to come right out from under the tree.” And the father and mother began to arrange tiny tracks and switches. When all was in place, the mother looked once more at the wonderful tree.

“Why, look at that Jack-in-the-box, he’s hanging way out of the box,” she said. “That will never do, it will spoil all the fun. Teddy would love to see it fly out at him

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and would call it the 'Scare Box.' I must fix it back in place." Then the mother pushed the Jack, with his black beard and black hair, down, down into the box, and she shut and locked the lid.

Poor Squeaky, hidden under the queer man's skirts, felt the springs close tightly about him and squeaked one shrill "Ee" of fright. The father said: "I never heard such a perfect squeak; it is wonderful the toys they make for children. Now in my day—" And his voice drifted off, as he turned out the lights and followed the mother upstairs to bed.

Poor little Squeaky. On all sides there seemed to be a big spring coiled and coiled about him. "I am in a trap," he moaned, "and they didn't even give me a mite of cheese to eat. But, then, nothing seems to

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hurt me. It is not the way Mother-Mouse said: it does not pinch me or choke me. I wonder what kind of a trap it is—a queer man with springs for a body. Well, I am safe for a while, but I wonder if he will ever let me get out again. I want to go home.” And poor Squeaky cried himself to sleep.

In the morning he heard shouts of “Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!” and it seemed as though the big tree trembled in all its branches, as the toys were taken down, one by one. Then such a noise was heard—drums beating, horns tooting, children shouting:

“Just see our new doll’s house!”

“Oh, see my new train, how fast it goes over these tracks!”

“Just see this beautiful dolly! She can open and shut her eyes, and she says

SQUEAKY AND THE SCARE BOX

'ma-ma, pa-pa' whenever I pull the string."

"Ee-ee-ee!" groaned poor Squeaky, "I can squeak 'ma-ma, pa-pa' that way too, if they would only let me out so that I could go home to my ma-ma and pa-pa."

As if in answer to his wish, Squeaky suddenly felt the box lifted down from the tree. "Come here, Teddy," said the children's mother, "here is a new scare box. We will have some fun. Now, carefully watch me and we will open the lid." Teddy leaned against his mother's knee, watching closely. "Are you ready? Well, let us count. One, two, three!" the mother opened the lid. Out jumped the man with the black beard and black hair and, with a loud squeak of joy, out jumped Squeaky. "Ee-ee-ee!" said Squeaky. "Ee!" said the Jack-in-the-box. "Whee-ee-ee!" yelled the small boy in delight.

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“Oh, Ee-ee-ee,” shrieked the mother, as she threw the box on the floor and, holding her skirts up high, she jumped on her chair, screaming, “a mouse! a mouse! a mouse!”

“Where? where?” they all shouted in a chorus. But little Squeaky whisked away so fast that they caught only a glimpse of his velvety fur and his long tail, as he dashed across the long hall back to the pantry, and home, and safety.

Squeaky gave queer little squeaky sounds, half sobs and half laughs, as he told father and mother mouse the whole story of his night in the house with the queer man with springs for a body. And there was great rejoicing among the Velvet family over the return of Squeaky.

In the living room they heard the children's father laughing as he helped their

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mother climb down from the chair. "Well," said he, "how did *you* enjoy Teddy's scare box?"





A CHRISTMAS TREE FOR SANTA CLAUS



ONCE upon a time the fairies planned a Christmas surprise for Santa Claus.

“I wonder what we can do to make him happy?” asked the Fairy Queen; “he always makes other people happy.”

“I know,” answered the Fairy King, “let us give him a Christmas party and after he returns from his long journey of love all around the world, let us lead him to the Christmas-tree forest and there we will have a tree all trimmed and ready for him.”

“Hurrah! hurrah!” shouted all the little

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brownies, elves, fairies and nymphs. "Hurrah! hurrah! what fun we shall have; a Christmas tree for dear old Father Santa Claus. We will ask Mother Santa Claus to help us plan it and she will tell us just what he needs and would most enjoy," said the Fairy King.

Now, you must know, children, that all the brownies, elves, fairies and nymphs always call Santa Claus and Mrs. Santa Claus, "Father" and "Mother" because they seem like a Father and Mother to all these little people, and they always help Santa Claus and his good wife make the Christmas gifts; for how would Santa Claus and Mrs. Santa Claus ever get all their work done in time for Christmas without all these good, little fairies to help them?

So, of course, when they planned for a

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Christmas tree, they asked Mother Santa Claus to help them. "Have everything ready," said Mother Santa Claus, "and, after Father has gone on his long journey, we will go out to the forest and trim the tree, and have everything in place before he comes home again. We will keep it as a great secret, for if he hears of it all our fun and surprise will be gone."

"We will never let him hear a whisper from us," said the fairies. "We will work and will wait patiently until Christmas Eve."

Then the fairies, true to their promise, worked and worked helping Father and Mother Santa Claus to make the Christmas gifts, and they were all very busy. Some of these dear little fairies helped Mother Santa Claus to make doll clothes and to furnish dolls' houses, hemming tiny table-cloths,

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fringing little napkins, making sheets and blankets and pillows and pillow-cases for the dollies' beds. They were such happy little fairies that they sang as they worked:

“The Christmas fairies find pleasure,
As they work for the good girls and boys,
For they know that the children will treasure
And value these new Christmas toys.”

The little carpenter elves liked to help Father Santa Claus in his big work-shop, as he sawed the wood brought in by the forest elves and brownies, and, with plane and hammer, he made houses for the dolls, chairs and tables and sleds and all kinds of wooden toys. The mountain dwarfs and goblins from the mines brought in the iron ore which they heated red-hot, and they helped Santa Claus make the engines, trains of cars, the automobiles, fire-engines and boats

A CHRISTMAS TREE FOR SANTA CLAUS and all the toys of iron and steel. They also brought him gold and silver and sparkling stones, while the water nymphs gave him pearls and coral and softly tinted shells which Santa Claus and his skillful helpers soon made into beautiful jewelry to give to some of the big, grown-up children on Christmas.

“Everybody is a child at this time,” said Santa Claus to his good wife, “and even if people do feel too large to play with dolls and drums, still they must have their trinkets and things to make them happy.”

“Yes,” answered Mrs. Santa Claus, “but we must have useful presents, too, Father.” So she would knit stockings and mitts and make warm caps, hoods and mufflers, new coats and dresses. Then, when the soft skins of animals were brought in, she would make

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nice fur collars and muffs for the big Mammias, and little fur sets for the little girlies, and then she would take teeny-weeny scraps of fur that were left over, and make fur sets for the dollies. Oh, Mrs. Santa Claus was a very sensible old lady, you may be sure.

Well, I could not begin to take time to tell you about all the marvelous things that were made in that wonderful work-shop, nor how busily Santa Claus worked at his big desk, writing stories while the artist fairies drew the pictures for him, for I do want to tell you how all these fairy helpers gave Santa Claus his Christmas tree.

When, at last, Christmas Eve came, Mother Santa Claus helped Santa Claus bundle up in his big, red cloak and pack his toys in a magic sleigh. Then she gave

A CHRISTMAS TREE FOR SANTA CLAUS

him a big kiss, and he gave her a big hug and a kiss and said: "Good-bye, Mother, Merry Christmas! I will be back when all is done. Good-bye!"

" 'When all is done' " said Mrs. Santa Claus, chuckling to herself, "we shall have it all done when he returns. Come, fairies!" and Mrs. Santa Claus, with all the brownies, elves and fairies, went out to the Christmas-tree forest.

The frost fairies selected a tall fir tree which they hung all over with shining, silvery threads of frost, while icicles, hanging from each branch, glimmered and glistened in the moonlight. "What a beautiful tree, frost fairies!" they all cried in a chorus, "But nothing is too good for our dear Father Santa Claus!" Then each put his present on the tree for Santa Claus.

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Mrs. Santa Claus had made him a new, beautiful red coat, with a cap to match, and she had trimmed it with soft, white ermine. Some of the tailor fairies had helped her, and they also had made him a new pair of trousers. The little cobbler elves had made him a new pair of tall boots and the glove-makers brought a pair of warm gloves. "We want his fingers to be warm," they said. Some of the fairies brought some animal skins and made them into a nice fur robe. The water nymphs brought him a new meerschaum pipe with an amber mouth-piece from out the sea, "For," they said, "he has smoked that old clay one so long that he ought to have a new pipe."

The forest fairies placed under the tree a wonderful, new magic sleigh, which was much larger than his old one. "He has to carry

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so much nowadays," they said. The mountain dwarfs had made for him some new, metal sleigh-bells which jingled out the merriest Christmas music.

Suddenly they heard the old bells tinkling on Santa's old sleigh and they all rushed back to the house to welcome him home. "What are you doing out here, Mother?" asked Santa Claus, "and all the brownies, elves, fairies, nymphs and mountain dwarfs out here with you? Why, don't you know this is the time for rest, before we all go to work for another year?"

"No, not to-night, Father Santa Claus. We are so happy we will dance until morning. Come with us to the Christmas-tree forest," and with all the fairy helpers pushing and pulling him, and Mother Santa Claus holding him tightly by the hand, Santa

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Claus was brought out to his own Christmas tree.

“Merry Christmas! Surprise! Surprise! Merry Christmas!” shouted all the fairies, and poor Santa Claus was certainly so surprised that he did not know what to say nor which way to turn. “A Christmas tree! And for me!” gasped Santa Claus in his bewilderment.

“Yes, yes, for you, for you!” they all shouted. “You are always making other people have a merry Christmas, and now we want you to have a merry Christmas. It is your very own Christmas tree, Father Santa Claus.” And then they brought out his presents and gave them to him.

When they had dressed him in his new suit, his eyes twinkled with pleasure as he said, “Why, I don’t know myself now; my

A CHRISTMAS TREE FOR SANTA CLAUS

old clothes were quite shabby and were tarnished with ashes and soot, and Dancer and Prancer and Dunder and Blitzen and all the reindeer will hardly know what to make of this beautiful new magic sleigh. And just listen to the merry music of our new sleigh-bells! How good this warm fur robe will feel over me! Sometimes it is pretty cold and my old one is getting thin and worn. A new pipe! Oh, that is fine! My old one is just a stump of a pipe which I had to hold tightly between my teeth, and now, with this new one, the smoke will encircle my head like a wreath. How good you are to me!" said Father Santa Claus, "and how did you ever plan it?"

"Oh, good Mother Santa Claus helped us; without her help we could not have had any Christmas tree surprise party at all."

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“Yes,” said Father Santa Claus, “it always takes the good Mother to plan and make a real Christmas party.”

Then the fairy helpers surprised Mother Santa Claus by bringing out a new dress which they had made for her, with a soft, lacy collar and a white cap, and the mountain dwarfs gave her a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles to help her as she did her sewing, and a new, gold pin set with corals was brought to her by the sea nymphs.

And then Father and Mother Santa Claus, dressed in their new Christmas clothes, stood under the sparkling tree trimmed by the frost fairies. Overhead the rainbow fairies came out and flashed their bright lights high in the northern sky, while all the Christmas fairy helpers, the brownies, elves, fairies, mountain dwarfs and nymphs,

A CHRISTMAS TREE FOR SANTA CLAUS
danced around and around them in a fairy
ring, calling gaily:

“Merry Christmas, Father Santa Claus!
Merry Christmas, Mother Santa Claus!
Merry, Merry Christmas to all the World!”



THE LEGEND
of
ST. NICHOLAS



THE LEGEND OF SAINT NICHOLAS



ONCE upon a time there lived in Myra a good man named Nicholas. When he was a young man his father and mother died of the plague, and he was left the sole heir of all their vast estate; but he looked upon all this money as belonging to God and felt that he, himself, was merely the steward of God's mercies. So he went about everywhere doing good and sharing his riches with all those who were in need.

Now there lived in that country a certain nobleman who had three beautiful daugh-

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ters. He had been very rich, but he lost all his property and became so poor that he did not know what to do to provide for his family. His daughters were anxious to be married, but their father had no money to give them dowries and, in that country, no maiden could marry unless she had her marriage portion, or dowry. They were so very poor that they could scarcely get any food to eat. Their clothes were so worn and ragged that they would not go out of the house and their father was overcome with shame and sorrow.

When the good Nicholas heard of their troubles he longed to help them. He knew that the father was proud and that it would be hard to give him money; so he thought that it would be best to surprise them with a gift. Then Nicholas took some gold and,

THE LEGEND OF SAINT NICHOLAS

tying it in a long silken purse, went at once to the home of the poor nobleman. It was night and the beautiful maidens were fast asleep while the brokenhearted father, too wretched to go to bed, sat by the fireside watching and praying.

Nicholas stood outside, wondering how he could bestow his gift without being seen when suddenly the moon came from behind the clouds and he saw that a window in the house was open. Creeping softly to the open window, he threw the purse right into the room where it fell at the feet of the nobleman. The father picked up the purse and was very much surprised to find it full of gold pieces.

Awakening his daughters the father said: "See this purse which came through the window and fell at my feet. It is indeed a

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gift from Heaven. God has remembered us in our time of need.”

After they had rejoiced together, they agreed to give most of the gold to the eldest daughter, so that she would have her dowry and could wed the young man she loved.

Not long after that, Nicholas filled another silken purse with gold and again he went by night so that no one should see him, and he threw this purse also through the open window. Then when the father saw this golden gift he again gave thanks. The money he gave to the second daughter who, like her sister, at once married the man of her choice.

Meanwhile the father was very curious to find out who was so kind to them, for he wished to thank the person who had come in the night to help them with these golden

THE LEGEND OF SAINT NICHOLAS

gifts. So he watched and waited night after night, and after a time the good Nicholas came with another silken purse filled with gold pieces for the youngest daughter.

He was just about to throw it into the room when the nobleman rushed from the house and, seizing him by his long robe, knelt before him, saying: "O good Nicholas, servant of God, why seek to hide thyself?" And he kissed his hands and feet and tried to thank him.

But Nicholas answered: "Do not thank me, my good man, but thank the Heavenly Father who has sent me to you in answer to your prayers. I am but His messenger to help those who trust in Him. Tell no man of these gifts of gold, nor who brought them to you in the night, for my deeds are done in His name."

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Thus the youngest daughter of the nobleman was married and she and her father and sisters all lived happily the rest of their lives.

The good Nicholas went about from place to place, and wherever he went he did deeds of kindness, so that all the people loved him.

One time he took a long journey to the Holy Land, and when he was upon the sea there came a terrible storm; so that the ship was tossed about and almost wrecked, and all the sailors gave up hope.

But the good Nicholas said: "Fear not, our Heavenly Father will bring us safely into harbor." Then he knelt and prayed to God and the storm ceased and the boat was brought safely to the land. Whereupon the sailors fell at the feet of Nicholas and thanked him.

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He answered them humbly: "Thank your Father who is in Heaven, for He is the ruler of us all. He it is who rules the earth and the sky and the sea, and who, in His good mercy, spared our lives that we may serve Him."

When Nicholas returned from Palestine he went to the city of Myra, where he was appointed a bishop. After that he preached God's Word and went about doing good all of his life. When he died the people said: "We will not call him Bishop Nicholas, but we will call him Saint Nicholas, for if ever there was a saint upon earth it was our good Nicholas." And so to this day he is called "Good Saint Nicholas."

And now in many countries, they tell the story of the good Saint Nicholas, and how he goes about the earth at Christmas-time

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bringing gifts of love to all who deserve them, and because he had put his gifts of gold in the long silken purses, our children to-day hang up their long stockings to hold his gifts; and when the children are very good he fills their stockings with sweetmeats, toys and trinkets, but if they have been naughty, they will find a bunch of switches, showing that they deserve to be punished.

We all know that on Christmas Eve Saint Nicholas will come in the night, for he never likes to be seen; and we know that he will always live,—for is he not the spirit of love? and love can never die.

So, every Christmas, let us give our gifts as he did those silken purses so long ago—without anyone knowing about it—and let our gifts be a surprise. Then we, too,

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can have the spirit of love and join in this celebration of Christmas with good Saint Nicholas.





THE GIFT
OF LOVE

THE GIFT OF LOVE



IT was a cold night for that part of the world, and the shepherds who were out watching their flocks upon the hillside drew their heavy cloaks about them. They had built a camp-fire to give them warmth and as they sat in a group about the bright blaze they told stories to each other.

“You speak of the coming of the King, Grandsire,” said a young shepherd-boy eagerly as he leaned toward an old man who was talking, “tell us more about the King.”

“Yes, boy,” answered the old man, “I

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will tell you the tale as my mother told it to me.”

“Long, long ago, there was a shepherd-boy named David who wandered on these very hills near Bethlehem, keeping watch over his father’s sheep. David heard the story of the promised king who was to be sent from God to rule over all of his people, and David was so happy that he played upon his harp, and as he led the sheep through the green pastures and beside the still waters, he sang of God as the Heavenly Shepherd.

“When David grew up to be a man he became a king and wore royal robes and a golden crown upon his head and he ruled over all the people. After David, came King Solomon, and no king could rival the grandeur of his palace and court. Since then many kings have ruled over us, but the

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promised King has not come upon the earth, and the songs of David have not yet been fulfilled.”

“Oh, how I wish that I might see the King!” said the boy earnestly.

“You are young, boy, and—who knows? maybe you will live to see the time when these prophecies come true. But I am old and weary with waiting and working and I may never live to see the promised King. Yet I know that the word of God will come true and that He will send His only beloved son to rule the earth.”

As the wind whistled over the hillside, the sheep huddled more closely together.

“Our little lambs will suffer with the cold,” said the shepherd-boy.

“No,” answered his father, “look at the way the mother-sheep lie closely about them,

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protecting the lambs with their warm bodies. No, the old sheep may feel the chill wind but they will not let their babies suffer."

"Just look at my little baby lamb," said the boy. "See it is curled up snugly by its mother. Oh! I do hope that no harm will come to it, for it is the tiniest lamb of the flock and I love it. Do you know, Father, I call it 'Snow-white' for it is like the white snow which we sometimes see on the far-distant mountain-peaks."

"Come, boy," said the father, "you have rested all day; so you watch the flock and the fire for a time and I will lie down here by Grandsire and take a nap."

The boy lay upon the ground looking at the camp-fire smoke curling up toward the sky. Then he looked at the sleeping shepherds stretched out upon the ground, and

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as his eyes rested upon the old man, he remembered the story and said softly: "How I should like to see that King!"

The cold wind seemed to die down and the clouds went across the sky like a flock of scurrying sheep, leaving the stars twinkling brightly in the dark-blue vault of the heavens.

"How beautiful it is, and how still!" he said.

He looked again at the group of sleeping shepherds, and then he looked at the sleeping sheep. As he watched, he saw his little lamb stir uneasily.

"Poor little baby, poor little Snow-white, I believe that it is lonely—I will hold it under my warm coat and protect it while the mother-sheep sleeps." And so the boy lifted the baby lamb in his strong arms, and,

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opening his coat, he held it closely in his bosom, while the mother-sheep slept peacefully by his side. The boy forgot to watch the fire and it soon flickered and went out.

He felt a strange chill over all the land, and it was so still—so very still that he wished the men would awaken, or that one of the sheep would bleat, for he felt lonely and afraid and he knew not why.

Suddenly he saw a bright light flashing through the heavens. Was he asleep or dreaming? He sat up and rubbed his eyes. No, the light was coming nearer and nearer, down, down toward the earth. Then he saw that the sheep were stirring uneasily and he heard them bleating, for they were frightened from their sleep. The shepherds, too, were awakening.

“What is the meaning of this strange light?” said one.

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“Has a star fallen from the sky?” asked another.

“See this golden cloud of glory resting over us. It is so dazzling bright that I dare not look upon it.”

The shepherds seized their staffs and some of them covered their faces with their cloaks, for they were very frightened. The old man went down upon his knees and looked up reverently while the boy stood motionless gazing spellbound at the radiant vision, for, as they watched they saw in this cloud of golden glory, a beautiful angel who came down, down to the earth and stood upon the hillside among them. When they saw this messenger from God the shepherds trembled with fear, and the angel said:

“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in

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the city of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you, ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.”

And, as the angel ceased speaking, suddenly the heavens opened and there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host who were singing and praising God, saying: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

Then the bright light was gone and the startled shepherds looked up long and earnestly toward the sky.

“Truly, it was a message from God,” said the shepherd, as he bowed his white head. “God has sent us this angel to tell us that the promised King has come.”

“But the angel said that the Babe was wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in

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a manger," questioned the boy. "Is it not strange for a prince to come to such a lowly palace?"

"Yes," said the old man, "it seems strange, but we know that He is truly the gift of love from God—His only Son who has been promised to us for, lo, these many years. I thank God that my old eyes have been permitted to see this heavenly vision. Come, we must go in haste to find Him."

"What gift of love shall we carry to the King, Grandsire?" whispered the boy.

"The most precious thing we own," answered the old man, "that which we love the best."

"But we shepherds have no gold nor silver, nor sparkling gems fit for a king," said one of the shepherds. "What, then, can we carry to this child?"

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“I know,” said the boy, as he looked lovingly down upon the little lamb which he was still holding in his strong young arms, “we can give this lamb—Snow-white; it is the purest and whitest little lamb from our flock. I love it and it is the best that we have to offer, and surely the good Father in Heaven knows that we are bringing our gift of love to the King.”

“The boy is right,” said the old man. “This baby lamb—the purest of the flock—is truly our gift of love.”

And so the shepherds went in haste down the hillside, the boy holding in his arms the baby lamb. Once it bleated softly, “Ma-Ma-a-a,” as though it called its mother, and the boy seemed to hear the mother-sheep on the hillside calling out, “Ba-ba-a-a,” as though she were calling her baby.

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“Poor mother-sheep, she will be grieving for her little one,” said the boy to himself, “but if she could only understand she would be glad to give her lamb to the King.”

At last they reached the little town of Bethlehem, and they came to a low stable built upon the hillside, and there they found their King—a tiny babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, as the angel had said, and lying in a manger.

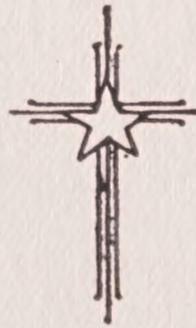
They saw the cattle standing near and Joseph watching over the Holy Mother Mary and the Heavenly Child.

This was no palace home; these were no royal robes of state, but the shepherds knew that the words of the angel were true and that this Babe was their promised king. The heavenly light was streaming from the face of the Holy Child and the shepherds

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covered their faces, for they could not look upon its radiance. Then they fell upon their knees and worshipped the Child, and thanked God that the gift of love had been given to all the waiting world.

The boy looked on with wondering eyes, and then he held out the little lamb, and the Babe smiled into the eyes of the boy and stretched out His tiny hands as though He would take the lamb. Then the boy sank slowly down upon his knees by the Babe and placed at His feet the tiniest lamb from the flock—a gift of love for the Christ-Child.







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