

*12 Days
of
Christmas
Stories*

Day 1

WHY THE EVERGREEN
TREES NEVER
LOSE THEIR LEAVES

WHY THE EVERGREEN TREES NEVER LOSE THEIR LEAVES

By Florence Holbrook

Winter was coming, and the birds had flown far to the south, where the air was warm and they could find berries to eat. One little bird had broken its wing and could not fly with the others. It was alone in the cold world of frost and snow. The forest looked warm, and it made its way to the trees as well as it could, to ask for help.

First it came to a birch tree. "Beautiful birch tree," it said, "my wing is broken, and my friends have flown away. May I live among your branches till they come back to me?"

"No, indeed," answered the birch tree, drawing her fair green leaves away. "We of the great forest have our own birds to help. I can do nothing for you."

"The birch is not very strong," said the little bird to itself, "and it might be that she could not hold me easily. I will ask the oak." So the bird said: "Great oak tree, you are so strong, will you not let me live on your boughs till my friends come back in the springtime?"

"In the springtime!" cried the oak. "That is a long way off. How do I know what you might do in all that time? Birds are always looking for something to eat, and you might even eat up some of my acorns."

"It may be that the willow will be kind to me," thought the bird, and it said: "Gentle willow, my wing is broken, and I could not fly to the south with the other birds. May I live on your branches till the springtime?"

The willow did not look gentle then, for she drew herself up proudly and said: "Indeed, I do not know you, and we willows never talk to people whom we do not know. Very likely there are trees somewhere that will take in strange birds. Leave me at once."

The poor little bird did not know what to do. Its wing was not yet strong, but it began to fly away as well as it could. Before it had gone far a voice was heard. "Little bird," it said, "where are you going?"

"Indeed, I do not know," answered the bird sadly. "I am very cold."

"Come right here, then," said the friendly spruce tree, for it was her voice that had called.

"You shall live on my warmest branch all winter if you choose."

"Will you really let me?" asked the little bird eagerly.

"Indeed, I will," answered the kind-hearted spruce tree. "If your friends have flown away, it is time for the trees to help you. Here is the branch where my leaves are thickest and softest."

"My branches are not very thick," said the friendly pine tree, "but I am big and strong, and I can keep the North Wind from you and the spruce."

"I can help, too," said a little juniper tree. "I can give you berries all winter long, and every bird knows that juniper berries are good."

So the spruce gave the lonely little bird a home; the pine kept the cold North Wind away from it; and the juniper gave it berries to eat. The other trees looked on and talked together wisely.

"I would not have strange birds on my boughs," said the birch.

"I shall not give my acorns away for any one," said the oak.

"I never have anything to do with strangers," said the willow, and the three trees drew their leaves closely about them.

In the morning all those shining, green leaves lay on the ground, for a cold North Wind had come in the night, and every leaf that it touched fell from the tree.

"May I touch every leaf in the forest?" asked the wind in its frolic.

"No," said the Frost King. "The trees that have been kind to the little bird with the broken wing may keep their leaves."

This is why the leaves of the spruce, the pine, and the juniper are always green.

Day 2

THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

From the story by O. Henry

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did.

When Della finished her cry she attended to her cheeks with a powder puff. She stood by the window and looked out dully. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day and she had only one dollar and eighty-seven cents to buy a present for Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling—something just a bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the looking glass. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall into its full length.

Now there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Young's in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and grandfather's. The other was Della's hair.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. She did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet. On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Mme. Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds." One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting.

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take your hat off and let's have a sight of it." Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practiced hand. "Give it to me quick," said Della.

Oh, the next two hours were rosy as she ransacked the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum watch-chain, simple in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by ornamentation-as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew it must be Jim's. Quietness and value-the description applied to both.

Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the eighty-seven cents. With that chain on his watch, Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home, she got out her curling irons and went to work. Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

"If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before he takes a second look at me-But what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

Jim was never late. Della held the watch chain in her hand. She heard his step on the stair and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please, God, make him think I am still pretty."

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-one-and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim's eyes were fixed on Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her.

"Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again-you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry Christmas!' Jim and let's be happy. You don't know what a beautiful, nice gift I've

got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, as if he had not arrived at that fact yet.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well anyhow? I'm me without my hair, aren't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously.

"You say your hair is gone?"

"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold and gone, I tell you. Be good to me, for it went for you."

Out of his trance Jim seemed to quickly wake. He enfolded his Della in his arms. Jim then drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

"Don't make any mistake about me, Dell," he said, "I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first."

White fingers tore at the string and paper, and then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! A quick feminine change to tears and wails, necessitating all of Jim's comforting powers.

For there lay The Combs. The set of combs that Della had wanted for so long. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell with jeweled rims—just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had yearned for them without the least hope of possession. And now they were hers—but the hair was gone.

She hugged them to her, and at length was able to look up with a smile and say, "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then Della leaped up and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her own bright spirit.

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell," he said, "Let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em awhile. They're

too nice to use just now. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now, suppose you put dinner on."

Eight dollars a week or a million a year. What is the difference when you have the spirit of giving?

The Magi, as you know, were wise men-who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days, let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. *Of all* who give and receive gifts, such as they are the wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the Magi.

Day 3

KNOCK KNOCK

 Knock Knock 

Knock Knock
Who's there ?
Mary
Mary who ?
Mary Christmas !



What do monkeys sing at Christmas ?
Jungle Bells, Jungle bells.



What do you get if you cross an apple with a Christmas tree ?
A pineapple



What did Adam say on the day before Christmas ?
It's Christmas, Eve



What do you have in December that you don't have in any other month?
The letter "D"



Why do reindeer have fur coats ?
Because they would look silly in rain coats



Who delivers presents to baby sharks at Christmas?
Santa Jaws



What is red and white and goes up and down and up and down?
Santa Claus stuck on a pogo stick.



What kind of food do you get when you cross a blizzard with a polar bear?
A brrr-grrr (burger)



What do elves learn in school?
The Elf-abet



What kind of bird can write?
A PENguin.



What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus?
Claus-trophobic.



What do snowmen eat for breakfast?
Snowflakes



Day 4

THE MAN WHO
MISSED CHRISTMAS

THE MAN WHO MISSED CHRISTMAS

by J. Edgar Park

It was Christmas Eve, and as usual, George Mason was the last to leave the office. He walked over to a massive safe, spun the dials, and swung the heavy door open. Making sure the door would not close behind him, he stepped inside.

A square of white cardboard was taped just above the topmost row of strongboxes. On the card a few words were written. George Mason stared at those words, remembering.

Exactly one year ago he had entered this self-same vault. And then, behind his back, slowly, noiselessly, the ponderous door swung shut. He was trapped—entombed in the sudden and terrifying dark.

He hurled himself at the unyielding door, his hoarse cry sounding like an explosion. Through his mind flashed all the stories he had heard of men found suffocated in time vaults. No time clock controlled this mechanism; the safe would remain locked until it was opened from the outside. Tomorrow morning.

Then realization hit him. No one would come tomorrow—tomorrow was Christmas.

Once more he flung himself at the door, shouting wildly, until he sank on his knees exhausted. Silence came, high-pitched, singing silence that seemed deafening. More than thirty-six hours in a steel box three feet wide, eight feet long, and seven feet high. Would the oxygen last? Panting and breathing heavily, he felt his way around the floor. Then, in the far right-hand corner, just above the floor, he found a small, circular opening. Quickly he thrust his finger into it and felt a faint but unmistakable, cool current of air.

The tension release was so sudden that he burst into tears. But at last he sat up. Surely he would not have to stay trapped for the full thirty-six hours. Somebody would miss him. But who? He was unmarried and lived alone. The maid who cleaned his apartment was just a servant; he had always treated her as such. He had been invited to spend Christmas Eve with his brother's family, but children got on his nerves and expected presents.

A friend had asked him to go to a home for elderly people on Christmas Day and play the piano—George Mason was a good musician. But he had made some excuse or other; he had intended to sit at home, listening to some new recordings he was giving himself.

George Mason dug his nails into the palms of his hands until the pain balanced the misery in his mind. Nobody would come and let him out, nobody, nobody, nobody.

Miserably the whole of Christmas Day went by, and the succeeding night.

On the morning after Christmas the head clerk came into the office at the usual time, opened the safe, then went on into his private office.

No one saw George Mason stagger out into the corridor, run to the water cooler, and drink great gulps of water. No one paid any attention to him as he left and took a taxi

home.

Then he shaved, changed his wrinkled clothes, ate breakfast, and returned to his office where his employees greeted him casually.

That day he met several acquaintances and talked to his own brother. Grimly, the truth closed in on George Mason. He had vanished from human society during the great festival of brotherhood and no one had missed him at all.

Reluctantly, George Mason began to think about the true meaning of Christmas. Was it possible that he had been blind all these years with selfishness, indifference, and pride? Was not giving, after all, the essence of Christmas because it marked the time God gave His Son to the world?

All through the year that followed, with little hesitant deeds of kindness, with small, unnoticed acts of unselfishness, George Mason tried to prepare himself.

Now, once more, it was Christmas Eve.

Slowly he backed out of the safe and closed it. He touched its grim, steel face lightly, almost affectionately, and left the office.

There he goes now in his black overcoat and hat, the same George Mason as a year ago. Or is it? He walks a few blocks, and then flags a taxi anxious not to be late. His nephews are expecting him to help them trim the tree. Afterwards, he is taking his brother and his sister-in-law to a Christmas play. Why is he so happy? Why does this bustling against others, laden as he is with bundles, exhilarate and delight him?

Perhaps the card has something to do with it, the card he taped inside his office safe last New Year's Day. On the card is written, in George Mason's own hand:

"To love people, to be indispensable somewhere, that is the purpose of life. That is the secret of happiness."

Day 5

HOW THE GRINCH
STOLE CHRISTMAS

HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS

by Dr. Suess



Every Who Down in Who-ville Liked Christmas a lot...
But the Grinch, Who lived just North of Who-ville, Did NOT!

The Grinch hated Christmas! The whole Christmas season!
Now, please don't ask why. No one quite knows the reason.
It could be that his head wasn't screwed on quite right.
It could be, perhaps, that his shoes were too tight.
But I think that the most likely reason of all
May have been that his heart was two sizes too small.

But, Whatever the reason, His heart or his shoes,
He stood there on Christmas Eve, hating the Whos,
Staring down from his cave with a sour, Grinchy frown
At the warm lighted windows below in their town.
For he knew every Who down in Who-ville beneath
Was busy now, hanging a mistleoe wreath.

"And they're hanging their stockings!" he snarled with a sneer.
"Tomorrow is Christmas! It's practically here!"
Then he growled, with his grinch fingers nervously drumming,
"I MUST find a way to keep Christmas from coming!"
For, tomorrow, he knew..... all the Who girls and boys
Would wake up bright and early. They'd rush for their toys!
And then! Oh, the noise! Oh, the noise! Noise! Noise! Noise!
That's one thing he hated! The NOISE! NOISE! NOISE! NOISE!

Then the Whos, young and old, would sit down to a feast.
And they'd feast! And they'd feast!
And they'd FEAST! FEAST! FEAST! FEAST!
They would start on Who-pudding, and rare Who-roast-beast
Which was something the Grinch couldn't stand in the least!

And THEN they'd do something he liked least of all!
Every Who down in Who-ville, the tall and the small,
Would stand close together, with Christmas bells ringing.
They'd stand hand-in-hand. And the Whos would start singing!

They'd sing! And they'd sing!
AND they'd SING! SING! SING! SING!
And the more the Grinch thought of the Who-Christmas-Sing
The more the Grinch thought, "I must stop this whole thing!
"Why for fifty-three years I've put up with it now!
I MUST stop Christmas from coming!
...But HOW?"

Then he got an idea!
An awful idea!
THE GRINCH
GOT A WONDERFUL, AWFUL IDEA!

"I know just what to do!" The Grinch Laughed in his throat.
And he made a quick Santy Claus hat and a coat.
And he chuckled, and clucked, "What a great Grinchy trick!
"With this coat and this hat, I'll look just like Saint Nick!"

"All I need is a reindeer..."
The Grinch looked around.
But since reindeer are scarce, there was none to be found.
Did that stop the old Grinch...?
No! The Grinch simply said,
"If I can't find a reindeer, I'll make one instead!"
So he called his dog Max. Then he took some red thread
And he tied a big horn on top of his head.



THEN he loaded some bags and some old empty sacks
On a ramshackle sleigh and he hitched up old Max.
Then the Grinch said, "Giddyap!" and the sleigh started down
Toward the homes where the Whos lay a-snooze in their town.

All their windows were dark. Quiet snow filled the air.
All the Whos were all dreaming sweet dreams without care
When he came to the first house in the square.
"This is stop number one," The old Grinchy Claus hissed
And he climbed to the roof, empty bags in his fist.

Then he slid down the chimney. A rather tight pinch.
But if Santa could do it, then so could the Grinch.
He got stuck only once, for a moment or two.
Then he stuck his head out of the fireplace flue
Where the little Who stockings all hung in a row.
"These stockings," he grinned, "are the first things to go!"

Then he slithered and slunk, with a smile most unpleasant,
Around the whole room, and he took every present!
Pop guns! And bicycles! Roller skates! Drums!
Checkerboards! Tricycles! Popcorn! And plums!
And he stuffed them in bags. Then the Grinch, very nimbly,
Stuffed all the bags, one by one, up the chimney!

Then he slunk to the icebox. He took the Whos' feast!
He took the Who-pudding! He took the roast beast!
He cleaned out that icebox as quick as a flash.
Why, that Grinch even took their last can of Who-hash!

Then he stuffed all the food up the chimney with glee.
"And NOW!" grinned the Grinch, "I will stuff up the tree!"

And the Grinch grabbed the tree, and he started to shove
When he heard a small sound like the coo of a dove.
He turned around fast, and he saw a small Who!
Little Cindy-Lou Who, who was not more than two.



The Grinch had been caught by this little Who daughter
Who'd got out of bed for a cup of cold water.
She stared at the Grinch and said, "Santy Claus, why,
"Why are you taking our Christmas tree? WHY?"

But, you know, that old Grinch was so smart and so slick
He thought up a lie, and he thought it up quick!
"Why, my sweet little tot," the fake Santy Claus lied,
"There's a light on this tree that won't light on one side.
"So I'm taking it home to my workshop, my dear.
"I'll fix it up there. Then I'll bring it back here."

And his fib fooled the child. Then he patted her head
And he got her a drink and he sent her to bed.
And when Cindy-Lou Who went to bed with her cup,
HE went to the chimney and stuffed the tree up!

Then the last thing he took was the log for their fire.
Then he went up the chimney himself, the old liar.
On their walls he left nothing but hooks, and some wire.
And the one speck of food that he left in the house
Was a crumb that was even too small for a mouse.

Then he did the same thing to the other Whos' houses
Leaving crumbs much too small for the other Whos' mouses!

It was quarter past dawn...
All the Whos, still a-bed
All the Whos, still a-snooze
When he packed up his sled,

Packed it up with their presents! The ribbons! The wrappings!
The tags! And the tinsel! The trimmings! The trappings!

Three thousand feet up! Up the side of Mount Crumpit,
He rode to the tiptop to dump it!
"Pooh-pooh to the Whos!" he was grinch-ish-ly humming.
"They're finding out now that no Christmas is coming!
"They're just waking up! I know just what they'll do!
"Their mouths will hang open a minute or two
"The all the Whos down in Who-ville will all cry BOO-HOO!"

"That's a noise," grinned the Grinch, "that I simply must hear!"
So he paused. And the Grinch put a hand to his ear.
And he did hear a sound rising over the snow.
It started in low. Then it started to grow...

But the sound wasn't sad!
Why, this sound sounded merry!
It couldn't be so!
But it WAS merry! VERY!

He stared down at Who-ville!
The Grinch popped his eyes!
Then he shook!
What he saw was a shocking surprise!

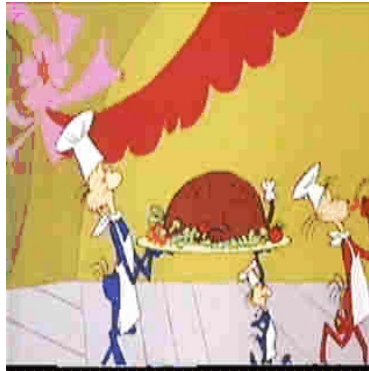


Every Who down in Who-ville, the tall and the small,
Was singing! Without any presents at all!
He HADN'T stopped Christmas from coming!
IT CAME!
Somehow or other, it came just the same!

And the Grinch, with his grinch-feet ice-cold in the snow,
Stood puzzling and puzzling: "How could it be so?
It came without ribbons! It came without tags!
"It came without packages, boxes or bags!"
And he puzzled three hours, `till his puzzler was sore.
Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before!
"Maybe Christmas," he thought, "doesn't come from a store.
"Maybe Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!"

And what happened then...?
Well...in Who-ville they say
That the Grinch's small heart
Grew three sizes that day!
And the minute his heart didn't feel quite so tight,
He whizzed with his load through the bright morning light
And he brought back the toys! And the food for the feast!
And he...

...HE HIMSELF...!
The Grinch carved the roast beast!



Day 6

THIS CHRISTMAS...

This Christmas...

*Mend a quarrel.
Seek out a forgotten friend.
Dismiss suspicion and replace it with trust.
Write a letter.
Give a soft answer.
Encourage youth.
Manifest your loyalty in word and deed.
Keep a promise.
Forgo a grudge.
Forgive an enemy.
Apologize.
Try to understand.
Examine your demands on others.
Think first of someone else.
Be kind.
Be gentle.
Laugh a little more.
Express your gratitude.
Welcome a stranger.
Gladden the heart of a child.
Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth.
Speak your love and then speak it again.*

*-- by Howard W. Hunter
given December 4, 1994*

Day 7

THE COBBLER
AND HIS
HOUSE QUEST

The Cobbler and his House Guest

There lived in the city of Marseilles, a hundred years ago, an old shoemaker, loved and honored by all his neighbors, who affectionately called him "Father Martin."

One Christmas he sat alone in his little shop, reading of the visit of the wise men to the infant Jesus, and of the gifts they brought, and he said to himself, "If tomorrow were the first Christmas, and if Jesus were to be born in Marseilles this night, I know what I would give him!" He arose and took from a shelf two little shoes of softest snow-white leather, with bright silver buckles. "I would give him these, my finest work. How pleased his mother would be! But I'm a foolish old man," he thought, smiling. "The Master has no need of my poor gifts." Replacing the shoes, he blew out the candle and retired to rest. Hardly had he closed his eyes, it seemed when he heard a voice call his name. "Martin!" Intuitively, he felt aware of the identity of the speaker. "Martin, you have longed to see me. Tomorrow I shall pass by your window. If you see me and bid me enter, I shall be your guest and sit at your table."

He did not sleep that night for joy. Before it was yet dawn, he arose and tidied up his little shop. Fresh sand he spread on the floor, and green boughs of fir he wreathed along the rafters. On the table he placed a loaf of white bread, a jar of honey, a pitcher of milk; and over the fire he hung a hot drink. His simple preparations were complete.

When all was in readiness, he took up his vigil at the window. He was sure he would know the Master. As he watched the driving sleet and rain in the cold, deserted street, he thought of the joy that would be his when he sat down and broke bread with his guest.

Presently, he saw an old street sweeper pass by, blowing upon his thin, gnarled hands to warm them. Poor fellow! He must be half frozen, thought Martin. Opening the door, he called out to him, "Come in, my friend, and get warm, and drink something hot." No further urging was needed, and the man gratefully accepted the invitation.

An hour passed, and Martin next saw a poor, miserably clothed woman carrying a baby. She paused, wearily, to rest in the shelter of his doorway. Quickly, he flung open the door. "Come in and get warm while you rest," he said to her. "You are not well?" he asked.

"I am going to the hospital. I hope they will take me and my baby in," she explained. "My husband is at sea, and I am ill, without a soul to whom I can go."

"Poor child!" cried the old man. "You must eat something while you are getting warm. No? Let me give a cup of milk to the little one. Ah! What a bright, pretty little fellow he is! Why, you have no shoes on him!"

"I have no shoes for him," sighed the mother.

"Then he shall have this lovely pair I finished yesterday." And Marten took down the soft little snow-white shoes he had looked at the evening before, and slipped them on the child's feet. They fit perfectly. Shortly, the young mother went her way full of gratitude, and Martin went back to his post at the window.

Hour after hour went by, and many needy souls shared the meager hospitality of the old cobbler, but the expected guest did not appear.

At last, when night had fallen, Father Martin retired to his cot with a heavy heart. "It was only a dream," he sighed. "I did hope and believe, but he has not come."

Suddenly, so it seemed to his weary eyes, the room was flooded with a glorious light; and to the cobbler's astonished vision there appeared before him, one by one, the poor street sweeper, the sick mother and her baby, and all the people whom he had aided during the day. Each one smiled at him and said, "Have you not seen me? Did I not sit at your table?" and vanished.

Then softly out of the silence he heard again the gentle voice, repeating the old, familiar words, "Who so shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me" (Matt. 18:5). "For I was hungered, and you gave me meat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in."

Day 8

CHRISTMAS TRIVIA

Guess the Christmas Carol

- 1. The Sanctiful Nocturnal Hours**
- 2. Hollow, Cup-Shaped Vessels of a Lustrous Gray-White Color**
- 3. Convene Every Religious Advocate**
- 4. Seraphim and Cherubim, We Have Audibly Perceived From Above**
- 5. Felicity to the Cosmos**
- 6. Lord Grant Quietness to Cheerful Male Homo Sapiens**
- 7. Far Off in a Feed Box**
- 8. Hours of Nocturnal Stillness, Hours of Nocturnal Sanctity**
- 9. The Holiday is at Hand, the Fowl are Becoming Obese**
- 10. I am Mentally Conceiving a Blanched Holiday**
- 11. I Audibly Perceived the Hollow Cup-Shaped Vessels in the Early Hours of December 25**
- 12. I Witnessed My Maternal Parent Pressing Her Oral Passage Against That of a Fat Elf Dressed in Red**
- 13. Tinkle the Hollow Cup-Shaped Vessels**
- 14. On The Primary Day of the Holiday My Fiance Presented Me With a Fowl in a Fruit Bearing Deciduous Growth**
- 15. Array the Passages**
- 16. From the Far Eastern Cultures Are We Triumvirate of Royalty**
- 17. The Primary Lack of the Twelfth Letter of the Alphabet**
- 18. Small Metropolis of the City of David**
- 19. The Petit Lad Who Played a Cylindrical Percussion Instrument**
- 20. It Occurred During the Unclouded Nocturnal Hours**

1.
2.
3.
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Day 9

TO BE A
BROTHER LIKE THAT

TO BE A BROTHER LIKE THAT

A friend of mine named Paul received a new car from his brother as a pre-Christmas present. On Christmas Eve, when Paul came out of his office, a street urchin was walking around the shiny new car, admiring it.

"Is this your car, Mister?" he asked.

Paul nodded. "My brother gave it to me for Christmas."

The boy looked around. "You mean your brother gave it to you, and it didn't cost you anything? Gosh, I wish..."

He hesitated, and Paul knew what he was going to wish. He was going to wish he had a brother like that. But what the lad said jarred Paul all the way down to his heels.

"I wish," the boy went on, "that I could be a brother like that."

Paul looked at the boy in astonishment, then impulsively added, "Would you like a ride in my new car?"

"Oh, yes, I'd love that!"

After a short ride the urchin turned, and with his eyes aglow, said, "Mister, would you mind 'driving in front of my house?"

Paul smiled a little. He thought he knew what the lad wanted. He wanted to show his neighbors that he could ride home in a big automobile. But Paul was wrong again.

"Will you stop right where those steps are?" the boy asked. He ran up the steps. Then in a little while Paul heard him coming back, but he was not coming fast. He was carrying his little polio-crippled brother. He sat down on the bottom step, then sort of squeezed up right against him and pointed to the car.

"There she is, Buddy, just like I told you upstairs. His brother gave it to him for Christmas, and it didn't cost him a cent, and someday I'm gonna give you one just like it; then you can see for yourself all the pretty things in the Christmas windows that I've been trying to tell you about."

Paul got out and lifted the little lad into the front seat of his car. The shining-eyed older brother climbed in beside him and the three of them began a memorable holiday ride.

That Christmas Eve, Paul learned what Jesus meant when He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Day 10

POLITICALLY CORRECT
SANTA

Politically Correct Santa

by (c)Harvey Ehrlich

'Twas the night before Christmas and Santa's a wreck...
How to live in a world that's politically correct?
His workers no longer would answer to "Elves",
"Vertically Challenged" they were calling themselves.
And labor conditions at the north pole
Were alleged by the union to stifle the soul.
Four reindeer had vanished, without much propriety,
Released to the wilds by the Humane Society.
And equal employment had made it quite clear
That Santa had better not use just reindeer.
So Dancer and Donner, Comet and Cupid,
Were replaced with 4 pigs, and you know that looked stupid!
The runners had been removed from his sleigh;
The ruts were termed dangerous by the E.P.A.
And people had started to call for the cops
When they heard sled noises on their roof-tops.
Second-hand smoke from his pipe had his workers quite frightened.
His fur trimmed red suit was called "Unenlightened."
And to show you the strangeness of life's ebbs and flows,
Rudolf was suing over unauthorized use of his nose
And had gone on Montel, in front of the nation,
Demanding millions in over-due compensation.
So, half of the reindeer were gone; and his wife,
Who suddenly said she'd enough of this life,
Joined a self-help group, packed, and left in a whiz,
Demanding from now on her title was Ms.
And as for the gifts, why, he'd ne'er had a notion
That making a choice could cause so much commotion.
Nothing of leather, nothing of fur,
Which meant nothing for him. And nothing for her.

Nothing that might be construed to pollute.
Nothing to aim. Nothing to shoot.
Nothing that clamored or made lots of noise.
Nothing for just girls. Or just for the boys.
Nothing that claimed to be gender specific.
Nothing that's warlike or non-pacific.
No candy or sweets...they were bad for the tooth.
Nothing that seemed to embellish a truth.
And fairy tales, while not yet forbidden,
Were like Ken and Barbie, better off hidden.
For they raised the hackles of those psychological
Who claimed the only good gift was one ecological.
No baseball, no football...someone could get hurt;
Besides, playing sports exposed kids to dirt.
Dolls were said to be sexist, and should be passe;
And Nintendo would rot your entire brain away.
So Santa just stood there, disheveled, perplexed;
He just could not figure out what to do next.
He tried to be merry, tried to be gay,
But you've got to be careful with that word today.
His sack was quite empty, limp to the ground;
Nothing fully acceptable was to be found.
Something special was needed, a gift that he might
Give to all without angering the left or the right.
A gift that would satisfy, with no indecision,
Each group of people, every religion;
Every ethnicity, every hue,
Everyone, everywhere...even you.
So here is that gift, its price beyond worth...

"May you and your loved ones enjoy peace on earth. "

Day 11

T'WAS THE NIGHT
BEFORE CHRISTMAS

The Night Before Christmas

T'was the night before Christmas, when all through the house,
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there.
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugarplums danced in their heads;
And Mama in her kerchief and I in my cap,
Had just settled down for a long winter's nap.
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters, and threw up the sash.
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,
Gave the luster of midday to objects below,
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer.
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his reindeer they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:
"Now, Dasher! Now, Dancer!, Now Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! On, Cupid!, On, Donner and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch! To the top of the wall!
Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all!!"
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,
So up to the housetop the reindeer they flew,
With a sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas, too.
And then in a twinkling, I heard on the roof,
The prancing of reindeer and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and turning around,

Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
and his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot.
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
and he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.
His eyes-how they twinkled! His dimples, how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow.
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.
He was chubby and plump -- a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself.
A wink of his eye, and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying a finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim as he drove out of sight,
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"

Day 12

A BIBLE NATIVITY



A Bible Nativity

AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, 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 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 suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.

Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet: And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judaea, art not the least among the princes of Judaea: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshiped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: