

SANTA'S LITTLE HELPERS

A Crimson Cloak Anthology

Volume 5

With contributions donated by

[L. Sydney Abel](#), [John L. D. Barnett](#), [Peter N. Bernfeld](#), [Rosita Bird](#), [Janice Clark](#), [Lynn Costelloe](#), [Don Ford](#),
[Barry Harper](#), [Cynthia MacGregor](#), [Lynne North](#), [Esma Race](#), and [Gary Winstead](#)

Edited by Veronica Castle

Additional crafts made and photographed by Sheila Riley

Crimson Cloak Publishing

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Where a charge is made for this book, all publisher profits will go to [Action Against Hunger](#)



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A note on spelling: you will find either UK or US spellings employed according to usage in the country of origin of the author concerned.

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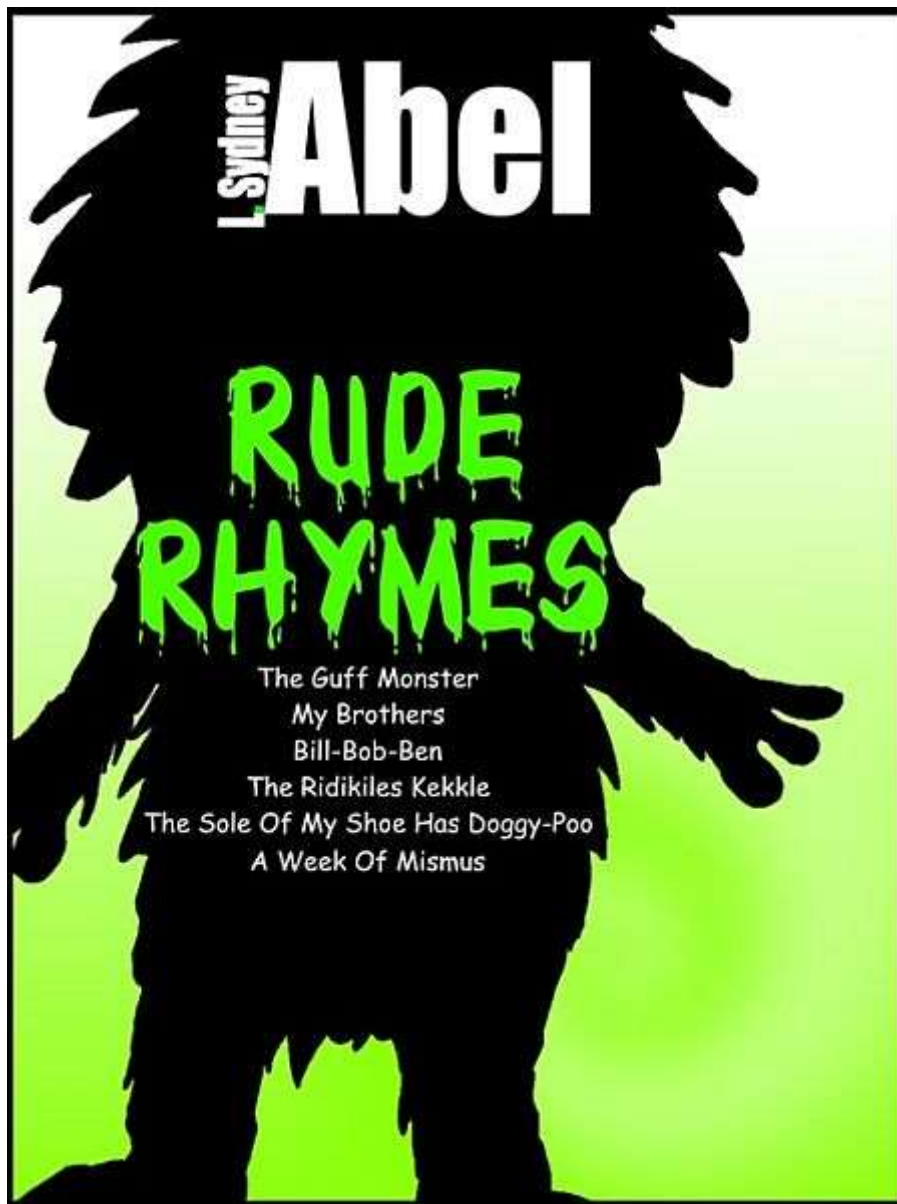


Picture by John L. D. Barnett

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[Rude Rhymes](#)

By [L. Sydney Abel](#)



The Guff Monster
My Brothers
Bill-Bob-Ben
The Ridikiles Kekkile
The Sole Of My Shoe Has Doggy-Poo
A Week Of Mismus

For the sister and brother that teased each other

*A message from Santa's elves -
Santa is thinking about not sending presents to children who have been reciting too many rude rhymes!*



*“Let the sky of stars shine upon this earth of ours,
And let all its children be as colourful as flowers.”*

The Guff Monster

He is eighteen feet tall and nine feet wide
And wherever you look he can manage to hide
The Guff Monster can slip under the door
Like fog creeping over your floor
Or appear in a green swirl of light
To give you the most terrible fright

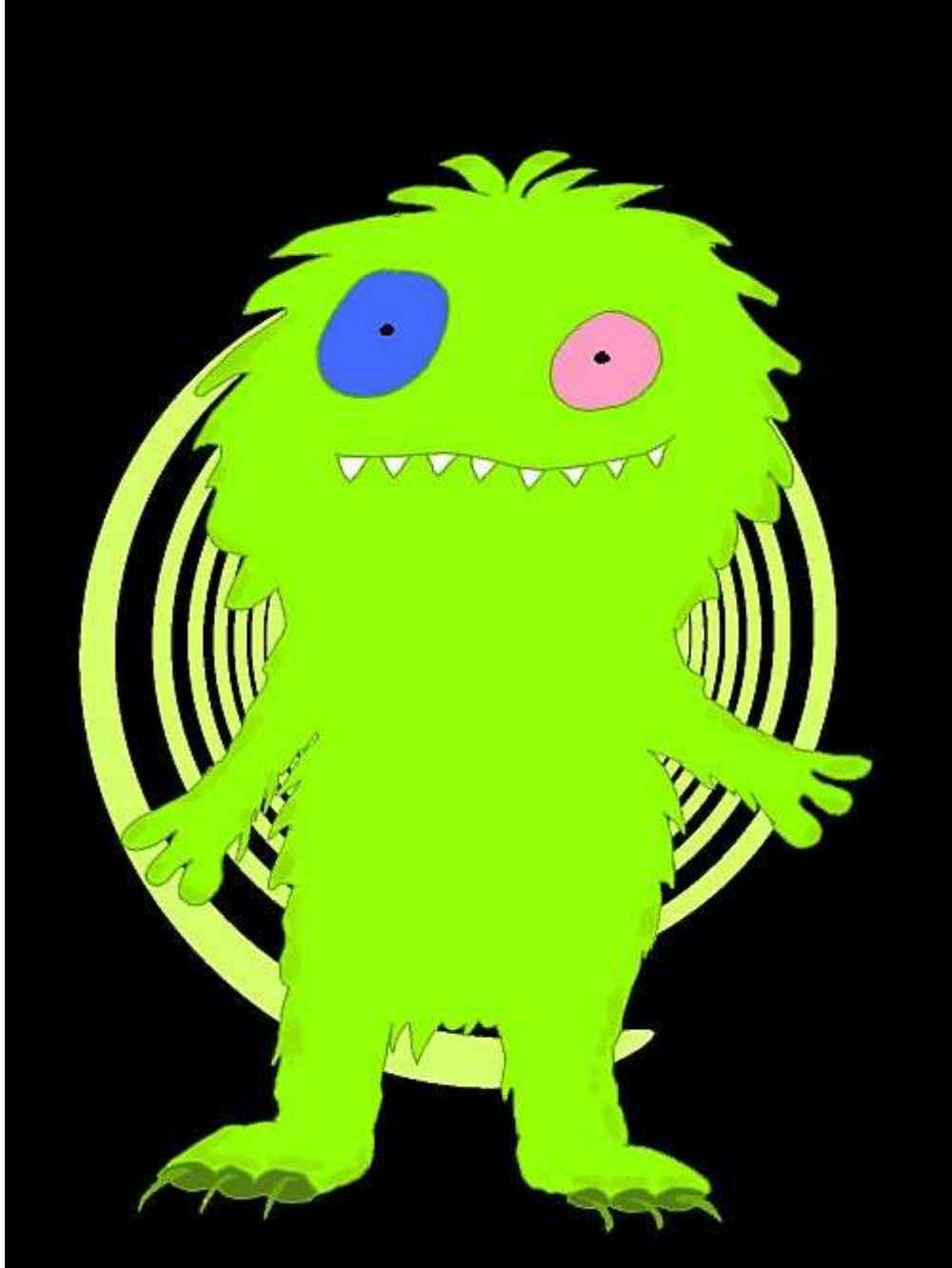
He can guff
He can trump
Let rip
Fart
And pump

The noise he makes will zip up your mouth
Making it difficult to laugh, or even to shout
Windy-bottom monsters visit day or night

So hold your nose ever so tight
If you're good there's no need to worry
If bad, then hide in a hurry

A silent one or a squeak or an almighty blast
The smell is horrendous and wow does it last

He can guff
He can trump
Let rip
Fart
And pump



My Brothers

A boy expressing some childhood fears, through his different years of growing up.

My Brother who's 5 is really very silly
He sleeps at night holding his thingy
I wonder who told him ...
That the sausage maker comes in the dead of night
And cuts off the thingies that aren't held tight?

My Brother who's 6 likes to camp
Makes tents out of sheets and cries when they're damp
I wonder who told him ...
About the pee-drinking being
Who lives in his toy cupboard and can't be seen?

My Brother who's 7 is one of a kind
He holds meetings with things that are left behind
I wonder who told him ...
It's best to leave them alone
So the spooky things won't haunt our home?

My Brother who's 8 is just too goody-good
He dreams of being a Count of true noble blood
I wonder who told him ...
That a blood-sucking creature hides under his bed
Who bites and drinks the blood that is shed?

My Brother who's 9 is a real scaredy-cat
Whatever he hears he believes it as fact
I wonder who told him ...
When he cries in the night
Out come the things that can eat him outright?

My Brothers were me and now that I'm 10
I'm all grown up and not frightened by any of them
I wonder what told me ...
That nothing can get you which you cannot see
So I sleep with my light on—happy dreams to me!

Bill-Bob-Ben



This boy has emotions that we all share. His emotions are shown in all that he feels. You can share your emotions with Bill-Bob-Ben, but only after he's told you his.

William Robert Benjamin Adare
Is a boy with emotions that we all share.
Emotions are what we all feel -
Without them life would not be so real.
They give meaning to feelings all through our day
When we're showing them in so many ways.
So I've changed his name to Bill-Bob-Ben
He's just like us all, ready to show, when?
Worry, joy, shame, to name but a few:
So try counting yours, how many have you?

Bill-Bob-Ben is proud when?
When he's at his school
And takes all the tests
Gets ten out of ten for being the best.

Bill-Bob-Ben is frightened when?

When alone in the dark
And monsters scare the most;
Who's that behind the curtain – is it a ghost?

Bill-Bob-Ben is happy when?
When he's ready for Christmas
And under mistletoes for kissing,
All the presents and toys from Santa he's wishing.

Bill-Bob-Ben is embarrassed when?
When he's had an accident
And he's wet his jeans
For not using the loo and waiting, it seems.

Bill-Bob-Ben is polite when?
When he's receiving some sweets
And knowing he's been good,
All the thanks he says, just like he should.

Bill-Bob-Ben is shy when?
When he's getting a kiss
And his cheeks are glowing
From the girl with the bunches, her heart knowing.

Bill-Bob-Ben is angry when?
When he's being kept in
And he shouldn't tell lies
For Mum can see red lights in his eyes.

Bill-Bob-Ben is sleepy when?
When he's watching the TV
And bedtime has long gone,
To be carried upstairs with his pyjamas on.

Bill-Bob-Ben is worried when?
When he's at the dentists
And has to open wide
In case they find something horrid and smelly inside.

Bill-Bob-Ben is upset when?
When he's at the cemetery
And takes flowers for Gran
And doesn't understand why he can't see her again.

Bill-Bob-Ben is surprised when?
When he's entering a room
And the lights are out:
'Happy birthday Bill-Bob-Ben' comes the deafening shout.

Bill-Bob-Ben is cross when?
When he's stamping the floor
And told 'don't be silly'
For the shirt he's got on looks so frilly.

Bill-Bob-Ben is hot when?
When he's rubbing and scratching
And his bed isn't neat:
Now he's covered in heat bumps from prickly heat.

Bill-Bob-Ben is cold when?
When he's making a snowman
And it's wearing his coat,
His hat and gloves, his scarf round its throat.

Bill-Bob-Ben is silly when?
When he's having a bath
And hasn't a stitch on:
Tries to cover himself when the bubbles have gone.

So how many have you? Count them and see! Then you can add them all in this book for me.
Below is for you to fill in. Put your name and emotion, then you can begin.

_____ is _____ when?
When _____
And _____

_____ is _____ when?
When _____
And _____

_____ is _____ when?
When _____
And _____

_____ is _____ when?
When _____
And _____

_____ is _____ when?
When _____
And _____

_____ is _____ when?
When _____
And _____

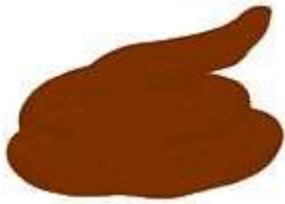
The Ridikiles Kekkle

The Ridikiles Kekkle has three holes
One under the lid of tin to let the water in
One at its spout that should let the water out
Its other is in its bottom.



Tinkle, tinkle, little Kekkle
You are now rusting metal
You can't help make my tea
For all you do is take a wee
Tinkle, tinkle, little Kekkle
Rust away you heap of metal.

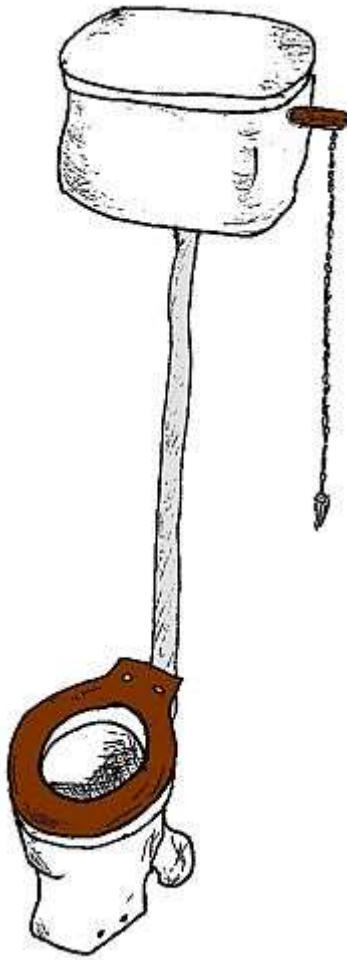
The Sole Of My Shoe Has Doggy-Poo



It wasn't there when I went out, but it was there when I came in;
The sole of my shoe has doggy-poo.

Should I...

Go back out and scrape it with a stick
Or wipe it on the grass
Or wait for it to dry
And while doing so
Wonder
Why can't dogs be like us and flush it?



A Week Of Mismus

On the first day of Mismus,
My friends sent to me
A giant green bogey.

On the second day of Mismus,
My friends sent to me
Two bags of doggy-poo,
And a giant green bogey.

On the third day of Mismus,
My friends sent to me
Three lumps of ear-wax,
Two bags of doggy-poo,
And a giant green bogey.

On the fourth day of Mismus,
My friends sent to me
Four toe-nail clippings,
Three lumps of ear-wax,
Two bags of doggy-poo,
And a giant green bogey.

On the fifth day of Mismus,
My friends sent to me,
Five smelly nappies,
Four toe-nail clippings,
Three lumps of ear-wax

Two bags of doggy-poo,
And a giant green bogey.

On the sixth day of Mismus,
My friends sent to me,
Six farting mice,
Five smelly nappies,
Four toe-nail clippings,
Three lumps of ear-wax,
Two bags of doggy-poo,
And a giant green bogey.

On the seventh day of Mismus,
My friends sent to me,
Themselves, all carrying,
Six farting mice,
Five smelly nappies,
Four toe-nail clippings,
Three lumps of ear-wax,
Two bags of doggy-poo,
And a giant green bogey.

Merry Mismus everyone!



Remember to be good, boys and girls!

The End

[Tim and Betsey save Christmas](#)

By [Peter N. Bernfeld](#)

Illustrated by [John L. D. Barnett](#)

Tim and his faithful talking horse Betsey were relaxing on Havana beach after a hard day's work pirating in the Caribbean. Tim had just finished a very colourful drink—one that had lots of ice in it and a straw and a small umbrella that kept going up his nose when he drank—when an exhausted elf staggered up to them.



“Tim, Betsey. Oh, thank goodness I’ve found you!”

“Why are you looking for us?” asked Betsey.

“Don’t be so suspicious, Betsey,” said Tim.

“Well, you know when people come looking for us it usually means trouble, with a capital tee,” said Betsey.

“You said it with a small tee,” said Tim.

“That’s because you don’t use a capital in the middle of a sentence,” said Betsey.

“That’s true if you are writing, but you were speaking so you could have said it with a capital tee. Anyway, you would use a capital if it was a name ...”

“Er, guys,” said the still exhausted elf.

“Yes?” Tim and Betsey said together.

“Oh, thank goodness I found you.”

“You already said that. What comes next?” said Betsey.

“Is there a capital tee in that sentence?” said Tim.

“Exactly how many of those colourful drinks have you had, Tim?”

“Aha! Now I hope you said my name with a capital tee because ...”

“OhthankgoodnessIfoundyou,” said the elf.

“AND?” Tim and Betsey said together. In capitals, to show they were getting bored with the conversation.

“We have a problem,” said the elf.

“Is that *we*, as in you, me and Tim or *we*, as in you and somebody else?” asked Betsey.

“All of us, we all have a problem,” said the elf.

“I have a problem. My glass is empty and it’s a very hot day,” said Tim.

“Yes, yes!” shouted the elf.

“Yes, what?” said Tim.

“Yes, it’s a hot day, here in the Caribbean. It’s always hot in the Caribbean at Christmas time.”

“And that’s the problem?” asked Betsey.

“No, no!” shouted the exhausted and by now thoroughly exasperated elf.

“Have you noticed that elves always seem to be so excitable?” Tim asked Betsey.

“This is the first one I’ve met. Do they usually shout and wave their arms around?” said Betsey.

“Havana we hava problem!” shouted the elf.

“I’m getting very bored with this. It’s still a hot day and I still don’t have another drink. What’s the problem?” said Tim.

“And there’s no need to shout,” added Betsey.

“Santa has put his back out and the reindeer all have ‘flu.’”

“Well, I’m sure we’re both very sorry to hear that. In fact, I’m sure I can speak for Betsey as well when I say that we both hope that they all get better soon. I’m just wondering what this has got to do with us, though.”

“Today is the 23rd of December,” said the elf.

“REALLY?” said Tim.

“Yes,” replied the elf.

“I hope you remembered to buy me a present this year, Tim,” said Betsey.

“That’s the problem. The big delivery is scheduled for tomorrow night and what with Santa not being able to lift anything on account of his bad back and the reindeer all down with the ‘flu, well, Christmas is just not going to happen this year,” said the elf.

“That’s going to make a lot of people very sad, but what’s it got to do with us?” asked Tim.

“I have a sneaking suspicion I know what this has to do with us,” said Betsey.

“We were wondering if you two could maybe do the delivery this year,” said the elf, hopefully.

“In theory, yes. Without looking at a map I’m not sure exactly how far the delivery trip is but I seem to remember that Santa had to fly to complete the deliveries in time, and I can’t fly,” said Betsey.

“No worries, mate,” said the elf—did I mention that he was an Australian elf? That’s the same as an American elf only they speak differently and like to have lots of something called ‘barbies’ on the beach.

“No, she really can’t fly,” said Tim.

“She’ll be right, mate. There’s a temporary flying spell we can use.”

“How temporary? It’s a long way to go,” said Betsey.

“No worries, mate. Long enough to get the job done.”

“Yes, but what happens if the temporary flying spell runs out before we finish the job? Remember, we’ve never done this before,” said Betsey.

“Try not to be too high up,” suggested the elf.

“I seem to remember that there are lots of presents to deliver and that Santa usually has a team of reindeer to pull the sleigh,” said Tim.

“That’s right. There’s Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen. Not forgetting Rudolph, of course,” said the elf.

“No, we mustn’t forget Rudolph,” said Tim.

“*Donner und Blitzen* is right. How am I going to pull the sleigh on my own if it usually takes that lot to pull it?” asked Betsey.

“No worries, mate. We can nano-nise the prezzies.”

“We can what the what?” asked Betsey.

“I think he meant shrink the presents,” said Tim.

“You can be quite clever sometimes, Tim,” said Betsey.

“Won’t everybody be disappointed if they get small presents this year?” asked Tim.

“It’s only a temporary spell, mate. Once you’ve left them underneath the tree and said the magic word, they’ll go back to full size,” said the elf.

“What’s the magic word?” asked Tim.

“You can set it yourself. Just like setting a password on your computer,” said the elf.

“Oh, dear. I can never remember passwords. If I forget, you’ll have to shout it down the chimney to me, Betsey,” said Tim.

“If I do that, then all the other presents will get bigger and I won’t be able to pull the sleigh. You’ll have to write it down, even though you’re not supposed to write passwords down anywhere,” said Betsey.

“That would do it. Er, by the way, you never did say how long the temporary flying spell lasted; and whilst we’re on the subject, how long does the shrinking spell last? I just know that I’m going to take longer than Santa usually does. Can I start early?”

“Oh no, can’t do that: but really, no worries, mate. There is a bit of flexibility in the schedule. You can run late and still make all the deliveries before Christmas morning, trust me.”

“Well it all seems a bit iffy to me,” said Betsey.

“I tell you what. Rudolph is a good sport, even when he has ’flu. I think that, under the circumstances, he would agree to take me on his back and we could go for in-flight re-spelling.”

“What’s that, when it’s at home?” asked Tim.

“I could meet you somewhere along the route and renew the spells. What do you say?”

Tim looked at Betsey. Betsey looked at Tim.

“She’ll be right, mate,” they said together.



And that is why you’ll get your presents this Christmas.

The End.

[Santa's Great Idea](#)

By [Rosita Bird](#)

Illustrated by [Lynn Costelloe](#)

It was Christmas time again and poor Santa had been down so many chimneys and eaten so many mince pies and Christmas cake that he got stuck more than once. He had to be helped by his elves and reindeer, who pulled him out.



Santa was getting very big: and one day he bent down to pick up the reins to his sledge when he felt a cold draft on his bottom. His trousers had split, exposing his long johns. (These are long underpants worn in cold weather.)



It was time for Santa to go on a diet. He thought long and hard about how and what he could do about all the cakes and pies. Santa didn't like to upset the children who had left these treats.



A great idea came to Santa: instead of eating all these treats he would collect them all in his sack. The sacks were then emptied and the treats given out to the many children around the world who sometimes go hungry.



Santa soon lost weight and had so much more energy that he went up and down the chimneys very fast.



Santa's trousers soon became too big and kept falling down. His Elves got to work to put elastic in his trousers just in case he ate the odd mince pie, so they would stretch a little. Santa was very pleased with his elasticated trousers, and smiled as the Elves offered him a piece of Christmas cake.

The End

[The Carousel Unicorn](#)

by [Janice Clark](#)

*Round and round, up and down,
The unicorn gallops around the carousel.
Round and round, up and down,
Her wooden mane flying, her green glass eyes shining,
Thinking her own wooden thoughts,
Looking almost as if she were alive.*

The delicate paper-thin roses woven through her mane were as lusciously red and pink as the prize-winning roses at the county fair. They looked so real, you could almost smell them. Her mane and tail streamed in the wind, even when she was standing still, as if frozen in time. She had been carved by the great master Santini, himself, and shipped all the way from Philadelphia at considerable expense.

Proudly she led the strong, beautiful horses, the fierce lion and bear, the graceful swan, and a shy-looking little zebra. Round and round, ten cents a ride, collected by Mr. Perkins, the attendant, who wore a red uniform trimmed with gold braid.

She was one of the town's most prized treasures. They had all saved up to buy her, with bake sales, carnivals, and gifts big and small. School children had given up candy to donate their pennies. Her picture had been in the newspapers. People came from miles around to ride the carousel, and especially to admire the unicorn.

Her name, the only name she knew, was Moonglow. Michael had given it to her. Michael was the youngest boy, the one who loved her most. There had been other children, other youngest boys, and sometimes girls, but now it was Michael. The others were only dimly remembered.

Michael often came to visit. His house was only a short walk from the park. When Michael's older brother, Frank, came to sail his boat, or fly his kite, or play with friends, Michael would beg to come along. As he was a quiet, well-behaved little boy and never caused any trouble, his brother usually agreed.

Sometimes Mama would give Michael a dime to spend. He always hurried past the ice cream stand, the popcorn and peanut wagon, and even the balloon man, straight to the carousel to ride his friend. He would pretend they were flying through the air or galloping across the meadow, or having some grand adventure. When he had no money, he would wait until there were no riders, then climb up to pet her, gently touching the smooth,

delicate roses in her mane as he whispered secrets in her ear. Sometimes, on slow days, the attendant let him ride for free.

He told her everything: all his hopes and dreams, all his happy moments and a few sad ones.

In fall, he spoke of big brother going to school, the smell of fresh apples stored in a barrel in the cellar, and the joy of leaping into a just-raked pile of colorful, crackling dry leaves.

In winter he talked about frosted cookies and frosted windows, Christmas and gifts, bells and singing, and a decorated tree with a star on top.

In spring he mentioned birds, new leaves, and kite-flying weather.

In summer, he told her about the little stream in the picnic meadow, just on the edge of town, where the water ran cool even in the summertime, and little fishes would pretend to nibble at your bare toes. He talked about dandelions and daisy chains, the sweet smell of honeysuckle, and the delicious taste of juicy blackberries, warm in the sunshine.

In all seasons, he told her about his treasures: the big, red ball Papa had brought him all the way from Kansas City; his book of colorful animal pictures; a shiny rock Uncle Arthur had given him that had real flecks of gold in it; a big, pearly pink shell that Grandma had sent from the far-away ocean. But mostly he talked about his family, how kind they were, and how much he loved them.

The unicorn listened silently, and treasured all this in her heart. Sometimes she wondered how it would feel, to run through the green grass or wade in the little stream. She tried to imagine the smell of honeysuckle and the taste of blackberries.

She was sad when Michael stopped coming for a while. She wondered if he had forgotten her, if he had stopped loving her. She had no way of knowing that his father was out of town on business, that his brother, Frank, was away at camp, or that Michael's mother and Betsy the maid were too busy with canning and preserving to come to the park. She only knew the boy wasn't there, and she missed him.

One night, when the newly risen full moon still hung low and fat in the sky and a thousand stars twinkled brightly overhead, the unicorn tossed her head and stepped off the carousel, leaving her brass pole behind. She sniffed the air, shook her mane, then set out down the road, straight to Michael's house.

The window of Michael's bedroom had been left partially open, to let in the cool night air. Moonglow could see him, lying in bed, one arm flung over his head on the pillow. She nickered softly, just the merest whisper of sound.

Michael shook his head and rubbed his eyes. He turned toward the window and his face lit up in a smile. Tossing back the sheet, he leapt out of bed and ran to the window, climbing up on the window seat to hug his friend.

No words were said, but Michael understood the invitation. He climbed out of the window and onto Moonglow's back. They raced through the town, silent as shadows, through the quiet streets to the meadow. Moonglow knelt so that Michael could get down.

They rolled in the grass and dabbled their toes in the water. The little fish, silvery in the moonlight, came up to play-nibble at their feet. The sweet, juicy blackberries were still warm from the heat of day. Honeysuckle perfumed the air. Michael made a chain of daisies and dandelions, and hung it on Moonglow's neck with the roses. Just before the moon set, Moonglow took Michael back home, then returned to her carousel.

The next morning, early visitors to the park were shocked to find that vandals had hung daisies and dandelions on their beautiful unicorn. Her knees were grass-stained, there was mud on her hoofs, and the purple marks on her mouth looked suspiciously like blackberries. Mr. Perkins, the carousel attendant, began cleaning and polishing right away. The mayor and chief of police suspected the pranksters were some wild college students from a nearby town, and sent a sternly-worded letter to the college authorities. However, no permanent harm had been done, and the townspeople soon found other issues to talk about.

That same morning, at Michael's house, Betsy the maid came in to close the bedroom window to keep out the day's heat. She was surprised that Michael, usually an early riser, was still sleeping. Then she giggled as she noticed purple stains on Michael's hands and face, and went running to fetch his mother. "Come quickly, Ma'am. You'll want to see this."

Michael's mother took one look at his face and laughed. "Why, that little scamp. Somehow he's managed to get into the blackberry jam." She wondered how he had been able to open the locked pantry door, much less reach the high shelves. "Might as well let him sleep. I hope he doesn't get a stomach ache."

Strangely enough, an inspection showed the pantry still locked, and no sign of missing jam. It was a puzzle, but soon enough forgotten with the business of summertime.

Since his mother and Betsy were both too busy to hear Michael's story of his wonderful dream, he only shared it with his teddy bear.

Back at the park, the freshly cleaned unicorn traveled round and round, up and down, looking as good as ever. It must have been the sun sparkling on her green glass eyes, but Mr. Perkins almost thought for a moment that she had winked at him.

*Round and round, up and down,
The unicorn gallops around the carousel.
Round and round, up and down,
Her wooden mane flying, her green glass eyes shining,
Thinking her own wooden thoughts,
Looking almost as if she were alive.*

The End

[Holiday Without a Christmas](#)

By [Don G. Ford](#)

A tongue-in-cheek story from the future

It will take a lot of getting used to. Christmas is no longer a recognized holiday.

The decision to ban Christmas was made in the 19th Circus Court of Repeals in the West Coast state of Confusion on July 4th, 2050. The panel of judges heard evidence and claims that basically led to their unanimous decision. Christmas had outlived its usefulness. It was argued that this particular day had become way too commercialized. When storeowners began bringing Christmas trimmings out in February, it was the last straw that sealed the deal.

The new ruling would rename December 25th as *The Holiday*. Everyone had been conditioned earlier to say Happy Holidays instead of Merry Christmas, so this had been in the planning stages for some time. Families would still be meeting for a festive get together with one important change. No longer would it be a day of giving, but rather one of taking. The way the Circus court spelled it out: each person was to go to any store in his or her neighborhood and pick out a gift to take home for himself or herself. This way there would be 'no one left behind' without a gift.

Too many children were going without on Christmas, while others were drenched in gifts galore. So now there is a one-person-one-gift rule that will be strictly enforced. Anyone caught taking more than one gift would face fines and imprisonment.

The churches that represented the voices of the moral majority could not be reached for comment. Christmas would now be called *The Holiday*. It would be mainly a time for families to get together, and would be still celebrated as a legal holiday on the American calendar. The merriment and drinking would still continue on Holiday Eve.

The next day on the calendar to be scrutinized for possible changes would be the Easter bunny one – another commercialized fiasco. This will not go down without a fight, what with egg farmers calling in every day registering their complaints.

The End

[Found Christmas](#)

by [Don Ford](#)

'Twas the night before Christmas,
And in our backyard
Sat a little blue wagon,
Why would someone discard?

The wheels were well buried
In winter's last snowfall.

Two kittens were sitting
And having a ball.

And me in my scarf,
And dad in his wool hat,
We rescued those kittens,
We brought them right back

Warmed by our fireplace,
While drying their fur,
The strangest of sounds
At the front door was heard.

A jolly big man
Looking very well fed,
"I see you found Christmas"
Was all that he said.

Author note: To get us all in the giving spirit, we should be giving all year around and recounting all of our gifts and blessings all the time.

The End

SYBIL THE SNEEZING SNAKE

By **Barry Harper** and **John L D Barnett**

Illustrated by **John L D Barnett**



Sybil the sneezing snake lived in a shoe box, in a shed at the bottom of Mr. Green Fingers the scarecrow's vegetable plot, with his mother Anna Condor. Unfortunately his father had recently been caught and sold by the local pet shop owner Mr. Dingle, so it was now down to her mother Anna to take care of her daughter Sybil.

It was Christmas Eve now and the snow was beginning to fall heavily. Both Sybil and her mother were warm and cosy in their little shoe box, which had been lined with dry straw that had been collected by their father from Mr. Green Fingers' hat, when the March winds began to blow 9 months earlier. The only problem was, Sibyl's mother had left her Christmas shopping trip a little late this year due to all the worry over her missing husband Sydney Snake, and she was now left with no choice but to battle through the freezing cold wind and heavy snow fall to get to the shops to buy her daughter's Christmas present.

Sybil had fallen asleep straight after tea, so her mother quietly wrapped up warm and headed for the shed door. Dexter mouse was the duty Door Mouse that evening, and was surprised when Anna Condor informed him that she was going out shopping, and would he tell her daughter Sybil where she had gone when she finally woke up.

By the time Sybil awoke it was quite dark, and the cold wind was whistling all around the little shed. There was a small hole in the side of her nice warm shoe box and Sybil could see right across the floor, and out through the shed's small glass window which looked out across the vegetable plot. The strong winds had blown a huge pile of snow against the side of the shed which had now reached the top of the window ledge, and this made Sybil shiver. Sybil loved playing in the snow, but hated the cold winds, which always made her sneeze. After calling out to her mother for what seemed like ages but receiving no reply, Sybil was now getting really worried.

Just as she popped her little head out of the shoe box lid to look around for her mother, Dexter Dormouse started to walk towards her. Unfortunately Sybil's nose began to tickle again with the cold air. "Aaaaaaa-Choo!" It was too late, Sybil let out a mighty sneeze which blew poor Dexter off his little feet, and sent him rolling across the shed floor before hitting his head on a garden spade which was leaning up against the side of the shed.

"Oh my! Oh my," said Dexter, holding his sore head in his little hands. "Sounds like you have a very bad cold coming on Sybil," he said, feeling quite shaken up from the fall.

"I'm really sorry about that Dexter," said Sybil, still feeling like she wanted to sneeze again but trying hard to hold it in. "Have you seen my mother Anna Condor anywhere, please Dexter?"



Dexter managed to brush himself off, whilst telling Sybil what her mother had said to him. It was now getting very late and the snow had started to fall heavily again: poor Sybil was frantic with worry, so she decided to go out and look for her mother, even though Dexter Dormouse had warned her against it.

Without thinking, Sybil suddenly flung open the shed door and ran out into the freezing cold air, calling out her mother's name, but the falling snow and strong blowing easterly wind had made it impossible to see for more than just a few yards. Sybil soon found herself well and truly lost in the frozen long grass that was now partially covered in snow, and what made matters worse, she had forgotten to wrap up warm.

She was so frightened and cold that she began to sneeze loudly, *Aaaaaaa-Choo, Aaaaaa-Choo, Aaaaaa-Choo*: poor Sybil couldn't stop sneezing now, which was very fortunate for Sybil because her mother had now arrived home from her Christmas shopping trip, and on hearing Sybil sneezing loudly she soon managed to find her, shaking like a leaf but still sneezing with cold. Quickly her mother took out the new Christmas present she had purchased at the local shops for Sybil, and wrapped her up in her new warm snake skin jacket to keep out the biting cold winter winds, before carrying her daughter back to the comfort of their warm little shoe box.



Sybil received her Christmas present early this year, but learned a very hard lesson and never again ventured outside in the cold winter air without wrapping herself up in her nice new warm snake skin jacket.

The End

Or is it?

[The Fiery Sneeze](#)

By [Lynne North](#)

“Go on, then!” the villagers encouraged, pushing Ned forwards. “Go ON.”

With no choice in the matter, Ned shuddered, but did as he was told and edged forwards to the gaping mouth of the cave.

“C ... C ... Cedric?” he all but whispered. There was no reply. “He’s not in,” Ned told the villagers, still using a very quiet voice.

“Call him properly!” yelled Tom, the blacksmith.

Ned heard movement from inside the cave, a heavy slithering sound. He turned to make sure he still had the support of his friends. Clearly he didn’t. Tom, the strongest man in the village, threw himself to the ground to hide behind some rocks. The rest of the group soon followed. Ned swallowed hard. Before long all that was visible apart from him standing out in the open was a pile of boulders with the odd arm, hand, foot, part of a leg or top of a head sticking out from behind them. Ned began to shake, staring anxiously at the space where his friends had stood a few minutes before. He then stared back at the black hole from which echoed the thump of heavy steps getting ever closer.

Ned considered running, then heard the rumbling deep voice from within the cave.

“Hello? Is someone there? Who is it? Ah, ahhhhh ...”

Ned flattened himself to the ground, his hands covering the back of his head, just in time as the huge, bellowing “choooooooooooooo” rang through the opening with a ball of flames that narrowly missed him.

Ned lifted his head slightly and saw the huge, scaly head appear through the flowers bordering the cave. The fearsome dragon stared down at the young man, his body still shaking from his nostril explosion. Ned remained still, not taking any chances.

“Oh dear,” began the dragon in his deep voice, “I’m so sorry, but what can I d,d,dooo?” he bellowed, sending sparks flying over Ned’s head and narrowly missing Tom who had taken that unfortunate moment to peer over the boulders wondering what was happening. Ned saw him duck down again rubbing at the ends of his singed hair.

As the heat passed, Ned lifted his head and looked back at the anguished dragon, standing with a huge paw clasped over his quaking nostrils.

“We must do something, Cedric,” Ned muttered from his place on the grass. “NO!” he continued, “don’t speak, Cedric. Please just listen.”

“Mmm,” mumbled Cedric the dragon through his scaly paw.

“We’ve always welcomed you living so near to our village. You are a great protector for us,” Ned continued, “but since your sneezing began in spring our trade has almost stopped. Jack the baker arrived with a wagon full of charred bread after passing your cave. The horses run so fast when they hear you that visitors either leave town before they know they’ve entered it, or arrive head first! Cedric, what can I say?” Ned asked, rising to his knees now. “We can’t go on.” He spread his hands in a gesture of apology, his face and tone showing the sadness he felt in being chosen as the spokesperson of the village.

“Do you want me to l,l,leave? Ahhh CHOOO,” sneezed the dragon, narrowly missing Ned with a ball of flames as he threw himself flat on the ground again.

Cedric gripped his snout, tears welling in his eyes.

Ned couldn’t bear to say yes. “Leave it with me”, he replied. “I’ll talk to the others.”

Sliding over to the boulders, still on his stomach just in case Cedric was overcome by another series of sneezes, Ned reached the tight pile of villagers. “I can’t do it! Could any of you?” He stared them all in the eyes, which were about three inches from the ground, one by one. No one spoke up. “Right,” Ned decided. “We can’t make him leave, so our only alternative is to cure him.”

“How?” asked Sam the stonemason. “Cut his head off?”

“That kind of talk won’t get us anywhere,” Ned replied. “Where’s Meggy?” he suddenly announced, noticing someone missing from the pile of bodies.

Everyone stared over or around their hiding place in horror. While they had been discussing the dragon, the little girl had slipped out from behind the boulders and ambled over to the dragon! She now stood singing to herself as she picked flowers from around the mouth of the cave.

“Meg!” Ned yelled. “Get back here!” If Cedric sneezed now, anything could happen!

The child turned to them, unaware of the danger and still sniffing her small bunch of red and blue flowers.

Ned began to speak again, but was cut short by a high pitched “*Atishoo!*”

All the village folk buried their heads in the ground, before they realised that the air was not blistered with heat. The sneeze had come from Meggy.

“Bless you,” Ned spluttered through a mouthful of earth. He then stared at the flowers, a thought forming in his mind. “Wait, yes. That could be it. I’m sure it is. Gather round, I have an idea ...”

The next day Ned stood at his full height before Cedric, staring at the cleared cave mouth. The men of the village had been very busy working long and hard. Not a flower was in sight.

“Thank you, Ned,” said the dragon. “I haven’t sneezed once since the villagers moved all the flowers. I had no idea I had an allergy to them and they were making me sneeze!”

“Glad to help, Cedric,” Ned replied with a smile, patting the dragon on his huge scaly paw. “And if you see any more flowers start to grow anywhere near your cave, breathe on them with your fiery breath. When no one else is around, of course!”

The End

[Gordon’s Great Adventure](#)

By [Lynne North](#)

Gordon looked around at his surroundings. Once he had found them lovely. Frost covered the grass, and the pond he stood by had a thin layer of glittering ice across its still surface. His friends stood nearby, as usual, Arthur with his fishing rod hovering over the pond, Fred holding the handles of his wheelbarrow, and Burt with his spade at the ready. Gordon didn’t have any tools of the trade, but that hadn’t bothered him at all when he first came to the Thompsons’ home. It did now. He felt like the odd one out.

The bushes and overhanging trees above the pond made Gordon feel trapped lately, enclosed in. He didn’t like it.

When Gordon had been bought from the huge garden centre in the summer and brought here as the new gnome he had felt excited, happy and wanted. The children, Oliver and Lucy, had fussed around him, placed him carefully as they gave him his name, and introduced him to the other gnomes. The older gnomes had lived in the garden for years, so Gordon became the centre of attention. As he had no tools and stood around with his hands in his pockets, the other gnomes called him ‘Gordon the Gaffer.’ He loved his new name, and played along as the ‘Boss’ overlooking their work. The children came out to see him every day, took photos of him, and brought their friends around to see him. They told him their dad had named the other gnomes, so he was special to them. Gordon had been happy. His new friends welcomed him warmly to their pond, and when they were alone with no humans around they had chatted, laughed and played in the sun. That seemed like a long time ago.

Gordon was no longer happy. The days were shorter and the cold nights much longer. The flowers that used to surround the pond had long since died away leaving nothing but soil to look at. The rain lashed down often, and even snow.

Gordon's friends were much quieter now, seeming happy to just stand deep in their own thoughts.

"It's always like this in winter, lad," Burt explained. "Relax. Spring will come around again soon enough."

Gordon didn't bother to reply. There must be more to life than this. The family showed no interest in coming to talk to Gordon anymore. He was no longer a novelty, he decided. They didn't want him. And, he was bored. Very bored. The only time he had seen the children recently was when they had nipped out the back door wrapped in thick coats, scarves and gloves. All they did was point at the bushes around him and the low hanging branches of the trees, giggling and chatting together. If they even noticed Gordon, they didn't say anything to him. They probably didn't care whether he was there in their garden or not. Maybe he should leave. The thought shocked him at first, but over the next few days it kept coming back to him.

"Do the family not care about us anymore?" he asked Fred one starry, frosty night when the family had gone to bed and the house lights had winked out one by one.

"Of course they do!" replied Fred, the gnome who had lived there longest. "They just have their own lives to lead and of course they don't spend as much time in the garden in winter. You worry too much, Gordon. They look after us, and they'll be in and out again in spring."

Gordon wasn't convinced. Anyway, it was a long time to spring.

Days passed, and Gordon fell into more and more of a depression. He saw the family through the window, happily putting up a huge Christmas tree. They laughed and smiled, the children clapping their hands in glee. *A great Christmas I'll have*, he thought, feeling very sorry for himself. It was then he decided. He would leave and find somewhere he would be more appreciated. He planned for another day, keeping his ideas to himself. He wouldn't even tell his friends. They wouldn't understand. They were old and set in their ways. They didn't know any better. Gordon was heading off on an adventure! With that thought, he began to feel happier already.

Gordon knew better than to make his move during the day. One of the unspoken rules about being a gnome was to never to let humans see you move. Most humans had no idea that garden gnomes *could* move. That made Gordon laugh. Children were more likely to believe, but never their parents.

The little gnome felt a bit guilty about not saying 'bye to his friends, but he didn't want them to persuade him to stay. Maybe they wouldn't have even tried, but once his mind was made up he didn't need anyone to give him doubts. He waited patiently until it was very dark and he thought the other gnomes were asleep. Taking a deep breath, Gordon edged away from the pond, a little at a time. All the lights of the house were out, and none of the gnomes moved or spoke. Once he reached the hedge, Gordon knew he had made it. He soon found out that wasn't quite the case. The hedge was thicker and pricklier than he had anticipated and only after a hard and painful struggle did his head push out at the other side. The rest of him followed, with just as much trouble. He fell out onto the pavement outside at last. He was free!

His excitement was short lived as he looked around. Well, he was out, but where was he, and where would he go? Gordon looked up and down the road for a while. Which way should he head? He hadn't thought about any of that. It was very dark, and equally cold. It occurred to him that his garden was well sheltered by trees and bushes making it quite a warm place to live, even in winter. Of course gnomes didn't feel the cold like humans do. They were meant to live outside. Still, he could feel a nip in the air away from his pond. He felt it even more when an icy drizzle began to form, soon turning into driving rain.

With his hands pushed back into his pockets and head down against the wind, Gordon turned right and headed down the road. One way is as good as another when you have no idea where you are going.

The almighty 'bong' almost made him jump out of his little black shoes! Gordon's heart stopped beating so fast, as the second and third bong continued to count out from the church clock. He had heard it before, but never this loud and in the deepest dark of night on his own. There were twelve bongs in all. He was usually asleep by midnight. After staring up at the huge imposing building for a while, Gordon turned the corner and walked more swiftly down the next road, then the next. He was pleased no one was around at this time of night, but all the same he kept aware because he would have to hide if a human came into sight. No one must see him walking! He had no idea where he was, but that didn't concern him. He would know where he was heading when he got there.

Gordon's enthusiastic walk didn't last for long. He soon began to feel weary. His legs weren't used to doing much, and they were very short. The dark too was very ... well, dark. He started to get jumpy at the slightest thing. A paper bag blew towards him and made him leap off the ground. A tin can trundling along the road was even worse! At least the rain had eased off now, for which he was grateful. Being wet wasn't a big problem for him, but he had no protection at all from bad weather out here. He thought back to his sheltered

garden where he would usually be standing with his friends. Gordon then shook the idea from his head. This was his adventure, why was he thinking back to the boring pond? He was quite angry with himself, and pushed on into the night.

Okay. He had to get his head together. The idea was to find a much better home where he would be appreciated more. Gordon stood looking around, his hands in his pockets. There were shops on this road. They were no use to him, shops didn't have gardens. He carried on to the end of the road, then down another. After turning another corner he saw a park, then beyond it some large and posh looking houses. This was more like it. Gordon could see himself now in pride of place by a huge pond with lots of high-class gnomes. All he had to do was find the right house.

He walked along the row examining each quiet house, locked up for the night. Which one did he want to belong to? At once, he knew which one. He spotted a lovely house with a well-kept front garden. The long velvet curtains at the downstairs windows were red, his favourite colour. His jaunty pointed hat was red. *I bet the gnomes are round the back*, he said to himself with a smile. He walked up the side of the house and climbed under the elaborate wrought iron gate, then moved towards the back garden. The other gnomes might be alarmed if he just ran around the back so he walked slowly until he could peep around the corner of the house.

As he wondered where the gnomes were, he saw it. And it wasn't a gnome. The dog saw him too. It looked too shocked to move at first, but it soon got over the feeling. In the split second Gordon turned and ran, the dog set off after him barking loud enough to wake up the whole neighbourhood. Moving as fast as his little legs could carry him Gordon ran for the gate and dived under it just as the dog got near enough to take a snap at him. It missed by a few centimetres. Gordon turned only once to see the dog scratching and jumping at the gate. He breathed a sigh of relief that it was too big to get under the gate as he had. Gasping for breath at the front of the house again, Gordon spotted the upstairs lights clicking on. The people were probably coming to check why the dog was making such a racket. He decided it was a good time to carry on running. He did, this way and that, until his little legs could take no more. He pushed into a bush and crouched there, his heart still pounding. Why would anyone have a dog in their garden instead of gnomes?

When Gordon could breathe again, he began to wonder where he was. He decided it was a hedge. He considered whether he should push on through it, or get out the way he came in. The decision was taken from him. As he looked back the way he came, two green, and very mean, eyes glared back at him. A fearsome hiss came from the cat and a clawed paw made a swipe at him. It was by sheer good luck that the leaves and branches prevented him from being struck. Pushing himself backwards, Gordon fought his way through to the other side of the hedge. He hoped the cat didn't know of another way in. Still tired from his run and with his heart pounding again, Gordon sat for a while with his head in his hands under the protective cover of the hedge. When he uncovered his eyes and sat back, he couldn't believe his eyes. A few yards away from him stood a pond, and seven gnomes. Gordon was so excited, he ran forward shouting, "Hey guys, you'll never believe what's happened to me!"

A couple of the gnomes jumped, and then turned to look at him. The biggest one stared at him, a strange look on its face. Gordon smiled. Then the smile froze on his face. He had to admit they didn't look too happy to see him. Maybe he should tell them his story to get some sympathy. "I've been chased by a mad dog," he began, "then attacked by a crazy cat!" he said, waiting for a reaction.

"And what do you want us to do about it?" asked a gnome with a white beard and green hat.

"Well, nothing really," Gordon said. "I just thought I'd tell you why I dashed into your garden. And it's so lucky I did, because I'm looking for a new home!"

"Good luck finding one then, 'bye," said the biggest gnome.

Gordon stared at him, his mouth open in shock. After a moment he decided they didn't know what he meant. He gave a little nervous laugh. "No, what I meant is, I'd like to live here now," he explained.

"Oh no, no, no," said another gnome holding a lantern. "That would make eight. That wouldn't do at all."

Gordon waited for an explanation, but none was forthcoming. "I'm not sure what you mean," he said finally.

"Well," said the biggest gnome in a sarcastic voice, "Apart from the fact you can't just walk in here and expect to live with us, we are seven, and seven we stay."

"Why?" asked Gordon, none the wiser.

"Grumpy, tell him," said the smallest, staring through his glasses.

"We are the seven dwarves," the one probably called Grumpy said. He certainly looked grumpy. "We are seven, not eight."

"But, you're gnomes?" Gordon said, trying to understand.

Grumpy sighed. "The children want dwarves. We want a nice home. We're now dwarves. Okay?"

"But," Gordon began again.

The look from all seven of them made him close his mouth. They didn't want him. He felt sad and humiliated.

"It's time you left," said the biggest. "Get along now. There's no room for you here." With that, they all turned their backs on him.

Gordon walked slowly away, his face glowing the colour of his lovely hat. He crept back into the hedge, hoping the cat had gone. There was no sign of it. Gordon was tired, miserable and lonely. He didn't know what to do, or where go. He sat amongst the leaves and before he knew it he was fast asleep.

The whooshing of a car passing nearby woke Gordon up with a jump. He hit his head on a thicker branch of the hedge and just missed poking himself in the eye with a twig. Rubbing at his head he peered out, trying to remember where he was. Day was beginning to dawn, and light snow was falling. He now remembered all too well where he was. Lost, and a long way from home. The word 'home' stuck in his mind. It *was* home wasn't it; and he had left it. The family were nice to him and his friends liked him even when he was miserable and moody. Life out here wasn't safe. What had he done? Maybe he should go back. They might not even have missed him yet. Yes. He felt better already. That's what he would do.

His heart fell again when he realised he had no idea where he was. He had turned right hadn't he, then right again? Or was it left? Then he had walked down a long road, and somewhere along the way there were some shops ... Gordon felt tears come to his eyes. He had to face it, he was hopelessly lost.

Before long he heard the family come out of the house and set off in their cars, probably on their way to work. It was no use going back to speak to the gnomes. They had been very clear about his welcome. His dreams of meeting new friends, then a happy family seeing him through the window in the morning and running out in excitement to meet him, had well and truly bitten the dust. He could try again but then he risked more dogs, cats, and unfriendly gnomes. He rubbed at his eyes in anger. He was a fool. He belonged with the Thompsons. It was no use sitting in a wet hedge feeling sorry for himself. That wouldn't get him home. He had to try. Now!

Gordon scrambled out of the hedge after making sure no one was walking by. This was going to be even more difficult because he couldn't allow himself to be seen. He brushed some of the wetness off, and then wondered why he was bothering as the snow began to hit him and melt on his hat again. He gave his best guess at the way he had come to find this house, and set off keeping very close to the hedges so he could jump back in if need be. The roads all looked the same. He had been running aimlessly on his way here after the incident with the dog, and it had been dark. He didn't recognise anything. He also had to keep jumping into hedges, behind cars or bins, and into any hole he could find when more cars drove past. He even hid in a wide pipe for a while as a young woman trundled past pushing a pram, her other hand hanging on to a youngster talking about school. Had he seen a school last night? Was it on his way home? If so he could follow them, but he had no memory of seeing a school. Was the child even going to school, or just talking about it?

Now if they had been talking about going to a shopping centre, that would have been different. He definitely passed shops. That gave him an idea. He sat where he was because it felt quite safe, and looked out for anyone carrying shopping bags. It was worth a try. After a while the thought occurred to him that most people were likely to go shopping in their cars. The light snow had stopped by now though, so he had to hope. At last someone did pass with shopping bags, but they were full so she must have already been to the shops. He wondered what time it was. Considering it only came light quite late at this time of year, the morning would be getting on now. Anyway, at least he knew which way not to head. Gordon came out of his hiding place and headed off in the direction the woman had come from. He had to find the shops. He didn't let himself wonder what he would do next. He would worry about that once he got there.

Everything looked so different in daylight. He could see Christmas trees in gardens and through house windows. This should be a lovely time of year. He wondered how long it was to Christmas Day. He had no way of knowing. All the time he pondered, he walked, hid, and walked again. He was getting quite good at avoiding being seen. Well, he hoped he was. At least no one had pointed at him yet and shouted 'Look, a gnome!'

His thoughts were broken by a trundling sound coming along behind him. By instinct alone Gordon ran behind a low garden wall and carefully peered around it. It was an old woman leaning heavily on a tall bag on wheels. That must be a shopping trolley? She was well wrapped up in a long coat, hat and scarf. She wasn't good on her feet so walked slowly. With no better chance to take, he decided to follow her. Keeping his distance he tailed the old lady. She didn't look back once. He could have whooped for joy when he turned another corner after her and saw the street of shops. He felt sure it was the same shops. They had to be. He couldn't even let himself doubt otherwise. He knew they had come a different way because he hadn't seen the park, but that didn't matter at all. He knew where he was. Sort of. Gordon was so entranced by all the glittering decorations in the shop windows, he almost forgot to hide. That was dangerous. He must leave the trees, lights and tinsel behind and head away from so many people. All he could do was turn away from the shops again but make sure he was heading in a different direction than the way he had just come.

That sounded fine, but after ages Gordon believed he must be going around in circles. He found himself in a road that he was sure he had been up already today. He also believed he was spending more time hiding than moving. Why were so many people about on such a cold day? He had the answer for that already. It would soon be Christmas. By the time the sky began to darken again, Gordon was still wandering, and hiding. He was ready to give up, but then what? Spend Christmas alone under a hedge or up a drainpipe?

He had been sitting hiding yet again amongst some tall flowers in someone's front garden when he heard it. At first it hadn't registered in his brain at all. At the third bong, Gordon remembered the church clock. Please! It had to be! Without a thought of being seen he began to run towards the sound as fast as his little legs could carry him. After the fourth bong, there were no more. So, it must be four o'clock. Longing for the clock to strike again, and praying it was the church at the end of the road where he lived that he had heard, he pressed on. At road turnings he still didn't know which way to turn. Remembering where a sound had come from wasn't easy when it had stopped.

Gordon had no idea how long he had searched when to his delight he heard the clock striking again. He ran and ran towards the sound until the fifth bong had faded away. It was much louder, and much nearer. It was of course also dark again by now so Gordon had less hiding to worry about. He carried on, his legs still moving fast despite his tiredness. In the back of his mind he wondered if he recognised this road, or was it his hopes making him imagine it? As he turned the next corner he almost wept with joy. The church was there right on the corner, almost beckoning him.

Not pausing to pay it any attention, he ran on again, past the houses down the road until he saw the red Fiesta that had brought him home on that happy day he had been bought from the garden centre. In seconds he was pushing his way back through the thick, prickly hedge, barely noticing it this time. Once through he stopped, something was different. In fact everything was different. For a moment he almost thought he was in the wrong garden, and then he saw the family outside. All of them. They were happy and smiling. Were they happy he had gone? At that moment, Gordon didn't know what to think.

He then heard Lucy scream, "Look, it's Gordon!"

He quickly dropped to the ground near the hedge. No one must see him move!

Lucy came running to him and picked him up, holding him gently but tight to her body. "Gordon, where have you been? We've all been so worried. We thought we'd lost you!"

You have, you did? Gordon thought. He was carried over to his friends and placed back in his usual spot, near to Fred. He was sure he saw Fred wink. The other gnomes seemed to be smiling. He knew they were happy to see him. He wanted to cry again.

"Look, Gordon." Oliver called, "look what we've been doing!" He waved his arms around at the low bushes and trees around the pond. Twinkling coloured lights festooned them all, glinting red, white and blue over their heads. It took Gordon all his time not to twist his head around and up to look at them all. That would have to wait until they were alone again.

There was even a small decorated Christmas tree in a red pot standing by the pond. "This is your tree, Gordon," Lucy pointed, unable to contain her excitement. "It will be Christmas in four days' time so we wanted our gnomes to have a happy Christmas too!" She then paused a moment and said, "Mummy, it looks like Gordon is crying. Is he not happy?"

"Of course he's happy, Sweetie," her mum said, "it's just wetness from the bushes dripping down his hat onto his face. Gnomes don't cry. I'm sure they are all very happy."

Lucy smiled, clapping her hands in glee.

Gordon knew better, gnomes did cry, both when they were sad and alone, and when they were happier than they had ever thought possible.

He was home, where he belonged. Where he was loved. Christmas would be the most wonderful day ever!

The End

[Horrid Rex at the North Pole](#)

By **[Esma Race](#)**

Illustrated by **[Veronica Castle](#)**



Horrid Rex was cold. The naughty little puppy dog had slipped out of the back door when his owner had opened it to go outside to the dustbin. Thinking he was fast asleep indoors, she had locked the door before going up to bed.

After spending some time out in the garden, Rex began to feel cold and decided to go back indoors. But he found himself well and truly locked out. The night was clear and bright, with sparkling frost. The stars were clear and the moon very full.

Horrid Rex looked around and couldn't hear or sense other creatures close by, and he started to shiver. He scratched gently at the door and whimpered softly at first, then when he got no response, his scratching became more frantic and his whimper became a bark.

Then he saw it. There on the front lawn was a bright shining sledge, being pulled by prancing reindeer and driven by a big man with a long white beard and dressed all in red. Also in the sledge were lots of elves, looking very busy.

Now Horrid Rex was only a little puppy dog and knew nothing at all about Father Christmas. He had seen deer in the fields when he had been out walking with his owner, so the reindeer didn't surprise him too much; and when he had been lost in Bracken Lea Wood that summer, he had met and talked to gnomes and fairies, so the Christmas elves were no mystery to him either.

So he crept closer to the sledge, thinking that it looked warm and cosy inside, and without the reindeer noticing him he slipped in and hid underneath a warm fur blanket.

The reindeer were waiting patiently for Father Christmas to return from delivering toys to all the children in the area, and when he returned to the sledge, it took off into the night sky, soaring over the rooftops, pulled by Rudolph and his friends, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen and Blitzen. There was lots of work to do on Christmas Eve.

When Father Christmas and his Elves found Horrid Rex, they were very surprised.



“Where have you come from, Little Dog?” asked Father Christmas, “and what is your name?”

“My name is Horrid Rex and I’m from down there,” said Horrid Rex, looking over the side of the sledge to the ground far below and shivering with fright.

“Well, well,” said Father Christmas, “what are we going to do with you then? We are off to the North Pole to load up the sledge with more toys.” He turned to his elves and asked them what they thought.

“We can’t turn back,” said one.

“We can’t take him with us,” said another.

“What I don’t understand is how he can see and hear us if we are part of the Magic Kingdom and he isn’t,” said the third Elf.

Horrid Rex had been listening carefully and looking from one to another with his big brown eyes, and when he got a chance, he said: “I lived in Bracken Lea Wood once with Glodwyn the Gnome and all his friends.”

“That explains it!” said Father Christmas, “You must have been touched with some fairy dust.” He looked down at Horrid Rex, who was lying down with his head resting on his front paws, and made his mind up how to deal with his unwanted passenger.

“Mother Christmas will look after you,” he told Horrid Rex; who of course had no idea at all who Father Christmas was, never mind Mother Christmas.

“I want to go home, please,” he said.

“You will be able to go home in the morning, little puppy,” said Father Christmas in a kindly voice, “but nothing must stop us delivering all the Christmas toys tonight!”



When they landed at the North Pole, Horrid Rex was handed over to Mother Christmas, who carried him into her log cabin home and made a big fuss of him, giving him treats to eat and a toy to play with.

Father Christmas and the elves flew up into the sky again, pulled by Rudolph and the other reindeer, who all had fairy bells and fairy lights fastened onto their harnesses, and they made a wonderful sight for anyone who could see into the Magic World.

Father Christmas was glad to have got rid of Horrid Rex, at least for the time being. "I wonder what he was doing living in Bracken Lea Wood?" he thought to himself. "I must go and ask Glodwyn the Gnome when I get the time."

Horrid Rex loved Mother Christmas, and Mother Christmas thought he was the loveliest puppy she had ever seen. He was on his best behaviour, but he had no idea where he was, and had no idea how he could get home. He was sure that his owner would be looking for him, because she had last time he was lost, and now he was not sure if he was lost or not. He did know that he was warm though, and he liked that; and he had been given supper by Mother Christmas. Now he curled up in front of a big log as they both waited for Father Christmas to come home.

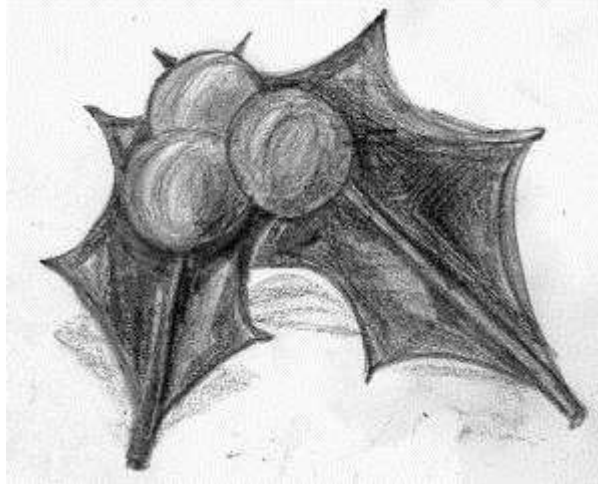
Mother Christmas watched Horrid Rex as he slept, then she took a piece of paper and a pencil and drew a picture of him; his lovely curly white coat, floppy ears, big brown eyes, and "feathered" tail. She noted his sturdy little legs and the gentle expression on his cute face.

"I shall make children's soft toys that look just like him," she told her husband when he came home.

"What a good idea," he replied: "but you can't call them Horrid Rex toys!"

"No, I've thought of that," said Mother Christmas. "I shall call them Cute Rex toys!"

"That sounds just right," replied Father Christmas. "Now let's get him back home, where he belongs."



Horrid Rex woke up on Christmas morning safe and sound in his own little bed at home. He couldn't remember anything at all about his Christmas Eve adventure at the North Pole.

One year later, when his owner was looking into a toy shop window, she said to him "my goodness, Rex; that toy dog looks just like you!"

Horrid Rex looked up at her and wagged his tail.

The End

[Saleh's Gift](#)

By [Gary R. Winstead](#)

Our story begins on the first day of the first year of our Lord 1883 in the shadow of the beautiful Cascade Mountains, strategically placed with a stunning view of Mt. Bachelor, just twenty five horse-drawn miles West of Bend, Oregon. A darkly clad, tiny man with a black flowing cape stood looking at the spartan home nestled in the rain shadow of the mountains. He was slightly stooped at the shoulders and when he moved there was a pronounced limp. As he straightened himself up to his full five feet one inch height, a cold wind blew snow around his ankles and he shivered against the chill. The slightest hint of an impending storm caused him to pause in place.

A thin, emaciated gelding stood, head down, still in the traces; the buggy he had pulled was tattered and worn as if the victim of neglect. Mr. Churl, the banker, pondered his next move and limped towards the house.

Churl was an unhappy, angry man who felt the only way a person got ahead in life was through constant work, no matter what time of year it was. "Wonder what their excuse will be for non-payment? Cursed is the man that sold that old geezer this prime land with a demand of payment only once per year. If only I could break that contract I would own all of his land. When I took the bank from the Carter Family no one bothered to tell me about this. Well, it is time to collect or send them packing. Two missed payments is all I need." He grinned at the thought and leaned into the wind.

The road he stood on was really not much more than a two horse, one buggy wide path used by the Cutter Family on their way to and from town. Its path was known locally as Shevlin's Rut and ended at the

modest fifty four acre spread co-owned by Great Grandpa Cutter everyone called Pappy, and the bank. In those days the mortgage payment was due once a year on ranch land and the new banker had come demanding payment, or the land, hoping for the latter.

As he drew near the house, a large Australian Ridgeback snarled a warning from just inside the wooden door causing the banker to stop in his tracks a few feet from the porch. "Hello in the house, can I come in?"

The home was a spacious, by contemporary standards, rustic ranch home. It had two bedrooms and a small room that doubled as a bathing place in the winter when it was too cold outside. Twenty paces downwind was the privy and next to that the ever present wood pile.

The humble abode was home to Pappy Cutter and his lovely wife Mabel and had a small combination kitchen/living area. The fifty-four acre property allowed them the space to raise a few head of cattle and in the short summer put up a meager supply of food to see them through the winter.

"What you want?" said a soft female voice from the interior of the house. "What kind of person comes out on a cold day on the first of the New Year? Heck, it is so cold out there ya might as well come on in and sit a spell. Want some coffee, maybe a few flapjacks?" Mabel was being her warm, friendly self, not suspecting what was coming.

The banker shook his broad shoulders and approached the unsuspecting woman. "My name is Churl, I own the bank and it is time to pay the mortgage; where is your husband? I don't do business with women." He stared at the slim redhead and tried his best to intimidate the frontier woman, which did nothing more than make her try harder to charm him.

"Please, sit here by the stove; let the warmth of the fire fill your bones," she offered with a warm smile of her own.

"I haven't time for that, woman." He demanded, "Where is he, your husband, this man everyone calls Cutter? I demand to see him now!"

As his face turned ashen the rear door to the rustic home opened, and with the smooth motion of a mountain lion, in glided Grandpa Cutter with an arm full of wood to keep out the winter chill. "Brr, it sure is cold out this morning, how 'bout some coffee, baby?" He had approached within a few feet of the stove before he saw the banker looming like a savage shadow over the rancher's wife. "Huh, can I help you, Mr. ...?"

"No time for this, I own the paper on this house and I demand payment now, today, right now. Gimme, gimme." Spittle was spewing from his mouth as he spoke and a look of greed and lasciviousness showed on his face.

"It's January first, a day of rest; what is so important you come all the way out here this day? You would have had to buggy overnight, in the cold to get here." Pappy looked perplexed at the thought. "Anyway, ain't no reason to be rude, how 'bout you have a seat by the fire while I get us both some coffee?"

"I don't have time for idle chatter. Wasting time is expensive, money is lost in talk: action is what I need. I have come for the annual mortgage. One Thousand dollars, now," he demanded.

In that instant, Pappy knew there was no use in trying to befriend this unpleasant man. The best he could hope for was to be courteous, talk to the man and get him out of the house as quickly as possible. "Well, yes, technically it is due right now, but I am afraid we will need just a little more time. See, the crop was bad and most of the cattle came down ill with the blue tongue so I just ain't got the money right now." A cold wind blew through the door as it swung open and little Billie Jo drifted in like a will-o'-the-wisp.

"Hi Pappy, Grammy; hi, Mister, my name is Billie Jo, how are you? It is so cold out there, hope you got warm." The broad smile on the face of the tiny little girl would soften the hardest soul, but did not seem to faze Mr. Churl. "Is this a bad time, Pappy? I got something to say. Good news, really."

"Yes, a good time indeed, Mr. Churl was just leaving." Pappy Cutter politely but firmly ushered the angry little man out the door and walked with him to the buggy. "I promise you that a year from now I will have all your money. Fortunately for us the last banker was a friend and trusted us to keep our word. You must be from back East. Out here a man's word is good as gold. See you next year."

The sickly little man forlornly climbed into his buggy and with a brisk motion turned the emaciated animal and headed back to town. It would be a long cold journey and the banker would have a long time to brood. "Darn it, he is right, curse the man that gave him that deal on the land. But there will be next year and this place will be mine."

Back in the warmth of his home Pappy Cutter hugged his little granddaughter and offered up some warm spicy tea. "So tell me what is so important you would come busting in here like this, little one." He smiled a warm smile at this sweet little girl and for a moment in time he forgot about the money problems they all faced. "Tell me Lass, what's up?"

"I kinda heard you and Grammy talking at Christmas last and I know things are tough for us right now. It was hard losing Poppa and Mama last spring and I know it is harder on you than you let me know." Billie Jo showed a great deal of maturity for a child of twelve. "But I think I can help get us out of trouble if this works.

How about we get a baby horse from Saleh, wouldn't that bring in a lot of money and keep the bad man from the bank away?"

"The timing would sure be right, if we can find a nice stud for Saleh the baby would be on the ground by the first of the year and would do nicely. I will find a good horse and get her bred right away." Pappy smiled at the thought and sipped his spicy tea. Grammy stroked Billie Jo's head as the three of them sat and stared into the fireplace, content that the coming year would solve all their problems.

Winter faded to spring, Saleh had been duly wed to a nice black stallion that was known for making fantastic babies, and as spring broke all was good at the Runnin' W.

Saleh was heavy in foal when the first hint of trouble showed on the horizon. Spring is an unpredictable time for weather in this part of Oregon and today was no different. The livestock were restless and the wind was out of the northwest. Any experienced rancher knew that meant an old Blue Northern was on the way. Pappy and Grammy and little Billie Jo were busy tying down everything they could and turned the livestock loose to fend for themselves. If a tornado were to hit, it was best to have them on free range so fewer might get hurt.

The storm struck in a very mountainous, uninhabited timbered area. Very few persons witnessed the tornado, and those persons were in poor position to actually observe it. Determination as a tornado is based largely on width of the path and appearance of wreckage it caused. Approximately 1800 acres of prime timber were destroyed, with an additional 1200 acres badly damaged. An estimated forty million board feet of lumber were blown down. The storm lasted no more than five minutes at any observed point and was accompanied briefly by golfball-sized hail. The storm occurred around four pm and had a ground path of about eight to ten miles and nearly two miles wide. It missed the ranch by miles but the resultant wind and rain played its part in making life just a little bit harder for the Cutter family.

And standing all by herself, as the sky cleared and azure blue shone through, unscathed by the storm, Saleh looked up as Billie Jo approached with a bucket of grain. The ground was sticky with mud from the storm and Billie's boots made sucking sounds as she approached her prize mare.

Saleh stood all of fifteen hands three inches at the withers and weighed in at a solid 1100 pounds. Her sweet red coat was matted down from the rain and she shivered in the wind but let out a little neigh as the young girl neared, making circling moves with the bucket. The mare greedily munched the grain as Billie Jo rubbed her growing belly. "This foal will be what helps out Pappy and Grammy." Billie Jo smiled at the thought and hugged her favorite horse around the neck. "I gotta get to school, Saleh, last week and all then we can spend the summer together. I will exercise you and keep you nice and fit for when the baby comes." With that the happy twelve-year-old hurried off to school.

Summer was a glorious time for the family. Billie Jo enjoyed the summer rains and the trip to the swimming hole. But most of all she enjoyed Saleh. Saleh had been a special gift given to her by Pappy and Grammy when her parents had died and the sorrel mare had helped to heal the wounds. Time had passed and the pair, animal and girl, had grown inseparable. It was if they had a magical bond, a language that only the two of them shared.

But there was also work to be done on the ranch and when Billie Jo was not with Saleh, or sleeping, she was hard at work in the fields. She would lose herself in work as red dust swirled up around her. When work was done she would hurry in and clean the horse's stall and make sure she had food and water. Only then would she allow herself to relax and let sleep come.

"Hey Pappy, how much longer before the baby horse gets here?" Billie Jo asked with a happy smile. "Saleh sure is getting big around her belly."

"Well, let's see. Today is the first of October, almost harvest time and if I remember her due date is the first week in January. Coming a little early would mess up her age but would keep that sad Mr. Churl away."

"Hey you two, come in for supper now. I got beans and Hamhocks ready to go. Just like you like 'um Billie Jo, with lots of onion and ketchup," Grammy hollered from the porch. The family Ridgeback, ever present at Billie Jo's feet, sprang up and followed the duo to the house. Seeing that his family was safe inside he hurried back to the pasture and lay down in the shade next to Saleh who had been standing with her back to the wind.

The first hint of winter came as quietly as a meadow lark and just as swift. The temperature had dropped overnight into the 40s. It was a sudden drop that no one expected. There were no weather men in the 1880s and all the rancher could do was watch for signs.

With first light Billie Jo ran to her favorite horse to comfort Saleh if needed. A now very fat with foal, Saleh, looked up from the water trough briefly then took a deep sip of the cold water and walked to her human. The two nuzzled like the old friends they were, then Billie Joe turned back to the house to get ready for school.

It was the second week of November and Thanksgiving would soon be upon them. The sky was blue, the air was cool and the wind brisk and all was right in the little world that a now teenage Billie Joe lived in. The crops were in the root cellar, the meat had been smoked for the winter and the wood piled high in a double row next to the privy. "Well, bye bye girl I will see you later, gotta go make some bread with Grammy." As she spoke, the Ridgeback looked up with the steady gaze he had and followed the girl, but just as quickly ran back to be with Saleh.

Pappy was standing on the porch looking intently off to the mountains. The Cascades can be a friend or a foe this time of year and concern shown in his old eyes. "You OK Pappy? You look worried."

"I don't like the looks of the sky. Looks to me like another one of those Northers coming. Let's make sure everything is put away after supper. Now how 'bout you and I get cleaned up and hope Grammy made some of her famous Peach Cobbler from the fresh picked peaches?" Billie Jo just giggled like a teenager would and hurried to the wash bowl.

After a large helping of fresh Peach Cobbler the three of them tidied up the kitchen and worked hard on the land around the house. They finished by making sure that Saleh and all the animals were safely in their stalls inside the barn. Unlike a spring Norther, a winter one brings snow and freezing rain so it was best to protect the livestock.

"Goodnight Grammy, Pappy." Billie Jo was tucked safely in her bed.

"I don't like the looks of the sky, gonna be awful tonight I think. Let's keep a big fire in the stove so Billie Jo don't freeze." Pappy tried to make the moment as light as he could, but Grammy knew from her long hard years just what he meant.

The Farmers' Almanac years later would record this month as one of the worst ever for this part of Oregon. For the state as a whole, snow was the heaviest during this November. For some areas, the heaviest one-day snowfall was reported that very night, while for others the heaviest one-day snowfall occurred during the last few days. For most locations, the heaviest occurred during the period of November through the first of the year. Snow was accompanied by high winds, creating widespread blowing and drifting of snow. Deep snow drifts blanketed the land west of the Cascades and through the Columbia River Gorge. A very severe sleet storm began around midnight. Within hours sleet piled up to depths of four to five inches in northwestern Oregon. During the early morning hours, the sleet turned to heavy snow, and created much havoc on the few isolated ranches located in the valley East of the Great Cascade Range.

Billie Jo was the first to see it, and hollering for her faithful dog tried to make a straight run to the barn hoping Saleh and the other animals made it through the cold. "Hello girl, how are you? Cold, yes? Well not to fear I am here." She fed all the livestock and curried her prize girl then headed to the house to prepare for school. Pappy was standing on the porch with a big smile waiting for his little grand baby.

"Hello little one. You sure made good time. Everyone OK out there?"

"Oh, yes Pappy, everyone is fine and all have been fed."

The heavy snow that morning meant Pappy and Grammy would spend a quiet day in the house and do whatever they could to keep the boredom away. They stood arm in arm on the porch and waved to the apple of their eyes, the little peach they had saved from the fire that had claimed her parents. Then they turned and headed indoors for some hot coffee and to read a good book.

Billie Jo struggled to get to the one room school house in the snow and was happy to see she had made it on time. Only no one else was there. They had all stayed at home, save for Miss Cromwell the English tutor the county had hired to teach the children of this enchanted land. With a big smile and a very deep accent she greeted Billie Jo warmly and for the next four hours Billie Jo was the center of attention. Finally at two o'clock Miss Cromwell told the youngster to pack up and head home while there was still light.

Miss Cromwell waved a goodbye as Billie Jo trudged off in the knee deep snow. Miss Cromwell was an affable woman who enjoyed her job and did her very best to give her knowledge to all the children in the county. She waited until Billie Jo was just a spot on the horizon then turned and stepped to her old wooden desk and prepared the next day's work. She sang an old English tune softly as night settled over the little one room school.

Winter had settled in on the Runnin' W and Christmas was just days away, and so was the New Year and the return of old Mr. Churl. "Can we get the tree up now Grammy?" Little Billie Jo pleaded. "It is December 23rd."

"Of course, go get the ornaments out of the barn and tell Pappy to bring the tree in." Billie Jo ran for the barn and hollered at Pappy as she did. When she entered the barn Saleh was lying down and moaning as only a horse can moan, rolling from side to side. When she heard the girl she jumped, as best she could with her big belly, to her feet and whinnied at her human friend. Billie Jo hesitated only briefly to stroke the horse's neck and check her udder then grabbed the box of homemade ornaments and ran back to the house.

While handing ornaments to Pappy she casually said, "I think the baby is coming early, Saleh's udder is full of milk and she is starting to show milk. Will that be a problem?"

"All registered animals are considered to have their birthday on the first of January. So even if she is born this week, for show purposes she will be a year old on the first of the year. But since we ain't gonna show it, it really is not that important when she drops. All we need is a healthy foal and we can keep Mr. Churl away for at least another year. Now finish up the tree, it's time for some hot apple cider with cinnamon."

The tree was finished, the trio full of hot apple cider and safely in their beds when it happened. As unexpected as an earthquake in that place they call California: The "Arctic Blast" of December 1883 was the most significant snow event in forty years and an event that utilized all available resources – people and equipment. It dropped nineteen inches of snow on the area west of Bend and east of Bachelor and was the snowiest December on record. In comparison, the whole winter season would prove to be less than average. It was as if it had been pre-ordained this day would come.

An arctic air mass caused extremely cold temperatures and strong winds bringing the wind chill factor to the single digits in some areas. Snow accumulated in various amounts throughout the region. Snow continued to fall Wednesday morning, December 24 and as quickly as it started it stopped. When Billie Jo opened her eyes and peered out the now snow dusted window, the sun shone bright and the wind was still.

"I better get out to the barn and see what the animals look like. That was a bad one all right." She was speaking to no one and to anyone as she quickly dressed and rushed to the barn. Two feet of snow was hard to trudge through but she pushed on and was shocked at what she saw. "Oh, no!" She hurried to the open barn door and peered inside to find an empty barn. All the animals, including Saleh and Barney the Australian Ridgeback were gone. Terrified she moved as fast as possible to the house shouting for Pappy and Grammy.

"Calm down girl, what's up?" a soft spoken Pappy inquired of the visibly excited girl.

"Everyone is gone, out of the barn, Saleh and Barney, nowhere to be seen. What we gonna do?" The bright sunlit morning was quickly fading to darkness as a heavy blanket of steel gray clouds flowed over the Cascades and covered the sky from the foothills all the way to Bend.

What had been a beautiful, piercing sunlit day was now a gloomy, overcast and foreboding time. "Pappy asked, "Were there any footprints we could follow? With all that snow last night it should not be hard to find them."

"Nothing I could see, they must have gotten out long before the worst of the snow fell. What now? Poor Saleh."

"All we can do is start a hunt in all directions. We will get our provisions for the day and start walking in ever widening circles around the ranch, they could not have gotten far." Pappy tried to show how positive and brave he was for the girl but deep inside he feared the worst and hoped for the best.

The sun was near to setting when Pappy called Grammy and Billie Jo over. "Looks like this is going to be a bad Christmas: as bad as I can remember. It is almost time for what little sun the clouds have allowed in to go down, and with the heavy clouds we won't have anything to show us the way. We need to head home or we will get lost ourselves way out here."

Billie Jo was not ready to go home; she was standing thinking what she could say to Pappy when she heard the first cry. "Ahhhh woooooooo," then again "Ahhhh woooooooo" and then a third time "Ahhhh woooooooo." Each was the same and at the same time different. Each one longer and more pronounced as if three different animals were singing in chorus. "Pappy, Grammy you hear that, what is it?"

"Sounds like a wolf or two," said Pappy. "We better get for sure before they have us for supper."

"Ahhhh woooooooo," closer this time and with more meaning, as if the wolf knew he was important and wanted to tell them something.

The humans were worried now and huddled close to each other as the sound of wild animals drew closer. When Billie Jo thought all was lost she heard the dreaded sound, one that to a Native American often meant doom. "Whooo, Whooo." The unmistakable sound of the wise old owl in the near distance, calling to the fearful trio.

But not all owls brought bad things; this one was just being playful and circling in the sky trying to tell the humans to look up. Look up! On cue the now almost frozen two legged animals arched their backs against the cold wind and looked skyward as the clouds parted and a full moon shone brightly. The owl flew off towards the moon, circled it twice and darted back to the humans. The brave old owl floated over their heads and would from time to time fly towards the bright light in the sky and back to circle Billie Jo's head. "What is that all about?" asked Grammy. "I have never seen anything like it."

The full moon cast a bright warm glow over the snow-covered hills as the family looked to the north. Suddenly three wolves appeared on a knoll not far from them and once again called out. One by one they would disappear over the hill and re-appear, all the while woofing and glaring at the still not moving humans. "I think

they are trying to tell us something,” offered Billie Jo. “Maybe we should follow them. Maybe they know which way we should go.”

With a little fear, but nothing else to turn to, the family followed the wolves over the first hill and then the second. The moon appeared to grow brighter as they crested the third hill. What they saw as they crossed the last hill made all three of them abruptly stop. “What is that? Is that what I think it is?” Billie Jo screamed happily.

Three of them all running as best they could drew to a stop as they neared what had made the little girl scream. The bright moon cast a warm glow on what could now be seen as the silhouette of her favorite horse and something else. Billie Jo was so excited she failed to see what was on the ground next to the mare. She covered the snowy distance in a flash and hugged her beloved horse. Saleh neighed a warm greeting and bent her head down to her left as if to tell Billie Jo to look.

That was when she saw it, and her heart momentarily stopped. “Oh, no, no. Please be alive.” On the ground next to Saleh was a big dog, her dog Barney and he was lying on top of the cutest filly foal anyone would want to see. He was keeping it warm against the cold night air. When Billie Jo bent down to stroke his head, Barney simply licked her hand lightly then again laid his head down on the little filly as if to say, “Not now girl, I got a job to do.”

Pappy and Grammy had walked up next to the dog and felt for the warmth on the foal that would show it was alive. The dog had protected the newborn from the cold using its own body heat. When Pappy touched the foal’s head the brave little creature opened its eyes and raised it as best she could and gave a strong childlike whinny. “All’s well.”

Pappy and Grammy then turned and stared up at the moon. The owl was circling and hooting softly. Off to the left the three wolves had settled on a high spot overlooking the humans and the animals. One of them stood and stretched and seemed to bow as if to say, “You are welcome, people.” The Cutters just smiled and nodded and turned back to see another figure coming at a dead run through the snow. As the figure came closer they saw it was another baby. Twins! Truly this was to be a great gift from Saleh.

This was an exciting time for the family of ranchers. They would be able to give one of the babies to old Mr. Churl, paying the mortgage, and keep one for themselves, meaning they were starting a herd of great horses.

Pappy pulled his old pocket watch out of his pants and by the light of the bright shining moon exclaimed, “Family of mine, miracles do happen. It is five minutes past midnight: Merry Christmas.”

Epilogue:

The next few years were good to the Cutter family. Little Billie Jo grew into a mature woman and married the nice boy from the ranch just twenty miles away. They raised a family of their own, kept generation after generation of Australian Ridgebacks, and a long line of babies descended from the great Saleh, and eventually were buried next to Billie Jo’s Pappy and Grammy on the fifty four acre ranch that a horse, a dog, an owl and three wish wolves helped keep for them.

Eventually the newest generation of Cutters would take up residence in Southern California where he and Margo reside to this day, keeping the dream alive.

The End.

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Crafts for the Christmas Season

By **Cynthia MacGregor**

From *Holiday Decorating Ideas for the Whole Family*

[Rockin’ Santa](#)

[Candy Cane Container](#)

[Miniature “Christmas Trees”](#)

[Candy Cane Hearts](#)

[Pomander Balls](#)

[Starring Santa](#)

[Stocking Santa](#)

[Christmas Mobile](#)

[Christmas Collage](#)

[Quilted Tree Ornaments](#)

[Traditional Popcorn Garlands](#)

[Recycled Window Beads](#)

[Mock Stained Glass Window](#)

ROCKIN' SANTA



Hey, guess what . . . Santa really rocks! At least, this Santa does—he's made from a rock. This project's easy and fun, and the result is an early visit from the jolly elf himself—or at least, a representation of him. Ho-ho-holidays—Santa's already at your house!

Approximate time needed: Half an hour

Ability/age level: Eight and up

Materials needed:

- One smooth, flat rock that is relatively round or oval in shape (rather than asymmetrical)
- White cotton
- Red felt
- Glue
- Paint
- Scissors

Procedure:

Wash the rock and let it dry thoroughly.

Paint a Santa face—eyes, nose, and red cheeks (no mouth, as the moustache and beard would obscure it)—onto the rock.

Fashion a moustache and beard from the cotton, as well as perhaps a few tufts of white hair.

When the paint is quite dry, glue the moustache, beard, and hair if desired onto the rock.

Cut out a red stocking cap (drooping cone shape) from the felt, attaching a small cotton ball to the tip of it. (This hat is one flat piece, to be pasted to the surface of the rock, rather than something the rock actually goes into.) Paste the cap in place on Santa's head.

CANDY CANE CONTAINER



The neat thing about these is that they serve a double purpose: Standing alone or in pairs, unfilled, they make lovely decorations for your shelf, mantel, coffee table, or whatever works in your home. But they also have a practical side, as they make great pencil-holders, marbles-containers, or holders for various other small items. And if you stick a sprig or two of evergreen in one of these containers, it's a great seasonally appropriate vase.

Approximate time needed: Fifteen minutes

Ability/age level: Even pre-schoolers can work on this with some parental help, and they'll enjoy it. Slightly older kids can work on it alone as long as you, the parent, check first that there are no sharp edges on the can.

Materials needed:

- Large empty can
- Box of candy canes whose length equals or exceeds the depth of the can
- Glue
- Ribbon approximately 12" long
- Optional: Green crepe paper
- Optional: Scissors

Procedure:

Check the can to be sure there are no sharp edges left where the top was removed. Ideally you'll have been keeping an eye out for a smooth-edged can in advance, and you'll now have a suitable can on hand for this project.

Wash the can, soaking it till the label comes off, and dry it.

Glue the candy canes to the outside of the can, all around, tightly against each other so the metal is hidden by the canes.

Optional alternative: First cut a piece of green crepe paper the right size to fit around the can, and glue it in place. Then glue four or six candy canes to the crepe paper at regular intervals. Make sure they adhere to the top and bottom edges of the can as well, for a better grip.

At the midpoint of the canes, tie a ribbon around the can, making a pretty bow from the ends. Optional: Put a few dabs of glue on the cane in various places to glue the ribbon to the canes and help it stay in place better. A green ribbon is good here unless you've used the green crepe paper option, in which case your best choice is a gold or silver ribbon.

MINIATURE "CHRISTMAS TREES"



Here's a real easy decoration to make, and one that the kids will enjoy both creating and looking at afterward.

Approximate time needed: Ten or fifteen minutes, depending on how you choose to decorate your "tree"

Ability/age level: Pre-schoolers can do this with a little parental help; slightly older kids can work on it alone

Materials needed:

- Large pine cone
- Jar lid that is just slightly bigger than the base of the pine cone
- Small sheet of aluminum foil
- Glue
- Paint and/or tinsel and/or glitter and/or sequins

Procedure:

First make sure the lid of the jar is clean, and then cover it with aluminum foil.

Glue the base of the pine cone to the top of the foil-covered lid.

Decorate the cone—you can paint it, or glue glitter or sequins on it, or drape tinsel sparingly around it, or some combination of these.

CANDY CANE HEARTS



Though hearts are usually thought of as Valentine decorations, love is appropriate any time, and indeed Christmas is a season of love. You've heard of wearing your heart on your sleeve? Here's a heart you can "wear" on your tree . . . or on your front door, or prop up on your mantel.

Approximate time needed: Ten minutes

Ability/age level: Nine and up

Materials needed:

- Two large candy canes
- Glue
- Four-inch red or white ribbon
- Optional: White lace

Procedure:

Place two candy canes on a flat work surface so they're facing each other with the "hooks" facing inward. Press the candy canes together so that the tips of the straight ends meet and the curves join together at one point too. They will form a heart shape.

Briefly separate them, applying glue to the places where they will join. Press them together again and hold them briefly, till you're sure you have a good weld. Let them dry.

Optional: When they are fully dry, glue white lace all around the outside for a Victorian effect.

In either case, with or without the lace, tie a ribbon at the top of the heart and leave a loop from which to hang the heart.

Optional: If you want to, you can simply prop the heart up, in which case tie the ribbon into a decorative bow.

POMANDER BALLS



Not only will this decoration scent your living room and look festive, but after Christmas is over you can retire the pomander ball to your linen closet and let it delicately scent your sheets and towels, too.

You need to create a pomander ball about a month before you actually want to start using it. If you typically decorate your house for Christmas during the first week of December, prepare your pomander ball no later than the first week of November.

Approximate time needed: Twenty or thirty minutes

Ability/age level: Strong enough to push a clove into an orange, or old enough to use a needle responsibly if you choose that option (see below).

Materials needed:

- Large orange (eating oranges are preferable to juice oranges if available)
- Approximately two ounces of whole cloves

- Approximately a foot of festive ribbon
- Optional: Darning needle and thimble

Procedure:

Starting at the top of the orange, insert four cloves in a tight circle (it will really look more like a square), touching each other.

Stud the orange all over with the cloves, keeping the cloves placed tightly together. Start just below those first four cloves and work your way down the orange in ever-widening circles. Hold the studded orange carefully to avoid breaking off the heads of the cloves you have inserted.

Optional: You can make the insertion of the cloves a little easier if you first pierce a hole in the orange with a thick darning needle. You'll probably want to use a thimble with the darning needle.

Save any leftover cloves to replace those whose heads get broken in subsequent handling.

Store the ball in a warm, dry place—a closet or cupboard will do fine—for about a month. Don't worry about mold or other spoilage; the cloves will preserve the orange while it dries out and shrinks.

When you take the orange out at the end of the month, and it's shrunk to its final size, spread the ribbon out upside-down and place the orange in the middle of the ribbon. Bring each end up so you can tie it at the top in a festive bow. If desired, run another length of ribbon up either side of the orange in such a way that the orange is divided into quarters by the ribbon.

If you tie a loop of ribbon to the bow on top, you'll be able to hang the pomander ball from the tree, from a plant hook in your ceiling, or from a cabinet knob. Instead of hanging it, you may prefer to use it as a holiday centerpiece, or place it on your coffee table, entryway table, credenza, or whatever works in the context of your particular home's furniture.

STARRING SANTA



Santa's the star of the holiday, and also the star of this ornament, since it starts with a star. But presto, change-o!—you'll create a Santa out of the star. Ready for some holiday magic?

Approximate time needed: Half an hour

Ability/age level: Nine and up

Materials needed:

- Red, tan, black, and white construction paper
- Cotton
- Glue
- Scissors
- Crayons

Procedure:

Cut a fairly large five-pointed star out of red construction paper. The star will become Santa.

Cut a circle out of tan construction paper. The circle will be Santa's face. The size should be such that the circle covers most but not all of one of the points of the star, with enough of the point showing that it will serve as Santa's cap.

Glue the circle in place according to the description above.

Using cotton, create a small beard and moustache for Santa and glue them into place.
Create white cuffs for Santa's sleeves and glue one on each of the two star points that serve as his arms.
You may also want to trim the two leg points similarly.
Cut out shoes from the black construction paper and glue them into place.
Glue a white dot of cotton to the tip of the star that is Santa's hat.
Cut out mittens from the white construction paper and glue in place on Santa's hands.
Draw eyes on Santa's face.
Hang from the Christmas tree, on a door, or from a curtain rod.

STOCKING SANTA



Got a stocking whose mate went the way of all stockings? Don't throw the odd one out . . . turn it into a Santa . . . and hang it on your front door, or in your window.

Approximate time needed: Twenty or thirty minutes

Ability/age level: Nine and up

Materials needed:

- Old stocking
- Wire hanger
- Cotton
- Red and blue construction paper
- Glue

Procedure:

Bend the hanger into as close to a circle as possible.

Stretch the stocking over the hanger from the bottom up.

Tie a knot in the stocking at the top, leaving the hook of the hanger sticking out.

Cut a conical and perhaps slightly floppy hat for Santa out of the red construction paper and glue it in place.

Form eyebrows, moustache, and beard out of the cotton and glue them in place.

Paste a puff of cotton at the tip of Santa's hat.

Cut two blue eyes out and glue them in place.

Optional: Cut two red spots for Santa's cheeks and glue them in place.

Hang on your front door or in a window, using the hanger's hook.

CHRISTMAS MOBILE



Everyone's into recycling, and here's one way to recycle your old Christmas cards! (For another way, see below.) If you don't have old Christmas cards on hand, save them this year so you'll have the materials for a mobile next year.

Approximate time needed: Highly varied according to the complexity of the mobile and the aptitude for mobile-making of the child or adult who works on the project. Figure at least half an hour and possibly several hours.

Ability/age level: Pre-teen and up

Materials needed:

- Nylon thread
- Supports such as dowel rods and/or hangers
- Scissors
- Glue
- Old Christmas cards
- Red and green crayons or paint.
- Optional: Cardboard
- Optional: Gold and/or silver crayons or paint
- Optional: Red and/or green construction paper, or Christmas wrap (preferably used and recycled)

Procedure:

From suitable cards, cut out large, appropriate figures—Santa, reindeer, Christmas trees, doves of peace, elves, and such.

Optional: If desired, you can glue the cut-outs to cardboard, then cut around the cut-out, on the cardboard, so the cardboard matches the cut-out in shape. This will give your mobile greater strength and stability, but it is not essential.

Decorate the backs of the cut-outs (or the back of the cardboard, if you've backed the cut-outs) with green and red crayon or paint. The simplest procedure, though it's less colorful, is to paint or crayon a solid green or a solid red (dividing the pile of cut-outs approximately in half, so you wind up with nearly equal quantities of each). More preferable is to paint or crayon alternating stripes of red and green. Or, if you prefer, color some of the cut-outs in a checkerboard pattern, in zig-zags, or in some other manner besides simple stripes. (You can also use gold and silver paint or crayons along with the red and green, if you want.)

Now comes the real challenge: suspending the cut-outs so they balance, in the manner of a mobile. A really simple mobile might consist of one hanger with three cut-outs suspended from it: one at each end and one in the middle. Far more complex mobiles are possible, if your frustration tolerance level permits. Constructing a real multi-level mobile requires patience and a lot of trial-and-error. Try hanging a dowel from one end—or each end—of a hanger, for instance, using a length of nylon thread to hang it.

CHRISTMAS COLLAGE



Along with the Christmas Mobile (above), this is another project that recycles last year's Christmas cards into this year's decoration. The finished product is suitable for framing and hanging on the wall, in the window, or on the inside of a door.

Approximate time needed: Forty-five minutes (varies greatly according to the complexity of your collage)

Ability/age level: Nine and up

Materials needed:

- Old Christmas cards
- Large piece of cardboard—at least 8"x10", and larger is better.
- Glue
- Scissors
- Green paint and paintbrush
- Optional: Brown construction paper

Procedure:

Paint the cardboard a solid green all over.

While it dries, cut out pictures from the old Christmas cards—a Santa, a reindeer (or a whole team of them), a sleigh, a snow-covered house . . . whatever seems useful to a collage.

Glue the pictures in place so they overlap each other artfully. Any parts of the cardboard that you don't cover will show as green and blend in with the Christmas theme.

Optional: If you want, you can cut out a "frame" of brown construction paper (four strips of paper of equal width, the lengths of the four sides of the cardboard). If you are going to frame your picture, though, plan ahead—don't, for instance, place a small Rudolph so close to the top edge of the cardboard that the frame cuts half his face off.

QUILTED TREE ORNAMENTS



Your kids will have tree-mendous fun creating these ornaments, and they'll add a great and glamorous touch to your tree in addition. The best part is, even a novice at crafts will usually have super success with this project and be able to point proudly to the ornaments, proclaiming, "I made that myself!" with justifiable pride.

Approximate time needed: Twenty minutes per ornament

Ability/age level: Old enough to handle a sharp nail file responsibly

Materials needed:

- Styrofoam balls
- Scraps of material (cotton and/or cotton/polyester, small print and/or solid color)
- Nail file (with sharp point)
- 3/8" ribbon or pipe cleaners

Procedure:

Cut the fabric scraps into pieces that are roughly circular or oval and are a couple of inches in diameter.

Lay one of the fabric pieces on one of the styrofoam balls. Now, place the sharp tip of the nail file about a quarter-inch in from the edge of the fabric, and use the tip to press the cloth into the styrofoam, securing it in place that way. Work around the entire edge of the fabric in this manner, till the whole piece of fabric has been secured to the ball.

Select another piece of cloth, not cut from the same fabric, and lay it on the ball so that a portion of its edge overlaps a portion of the first cloth piece.

Repeat with this second piece the procedure by which you embedded the edges of the first piece into the styrofoam with the nail file. Utilize the existing grooves, pushing the second piece of material into the same slots in the styrofoam that you created when you embedded the first piece.

Continue in this manner till the entire ball is covered.

There are two choices of ways to hang the balls once they're complete. One is to push one end of a pipe cleaner into the top of the ball, then form a hook from the other end. The other is to loop a piece of ribbon and push the two ends into the top of the ball, using the loop as a hook.

TRADITIONAL POPCORN GARLANDS



Strings of popcorn are an old-fashioned tree decoration or mantel decoration. Let's bring the tradition back!

Approximate time needed: Perhaps ten minutes for each strand

Ability/age level: Old enough to use a needle responsibly

Materials:

- Darning needle
- Thimble
- Red and/or green thread
- Popcorn
- Optional: Cranberries

Procedure:

Pop a batch of popcorn.

Thread a darning needle with a long strand of strong red or green thread and tie a double knot at the end.

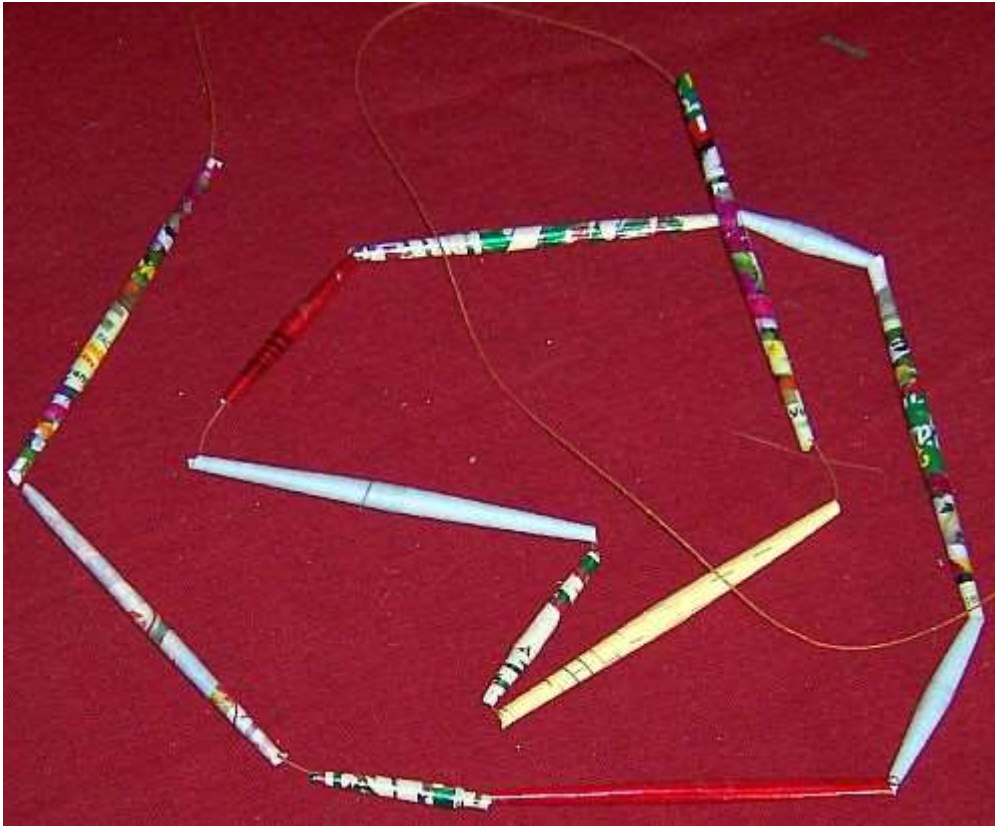
Push the needle through the popcorn. Thread it down to the knot. Repeat with another kernel . . . and continue in that manner till the thread is filled. Leave enough thread at the end to tie a knot at that end too after you have snipped the thread to remove the needle.

Optional: Intersperse cranberries with the popcorn, either alternating one popcorn kernel, one cranberry, one popcorn kernel, one cranberry, or interpolating one cranberry after every fifth popcorn kernel, or even spacing them in at irregular intervals.

Make as many popcorn garlands as you'd like, using them to trim the tree, to drape over doorways and across windows, and to decorate your mantel.

Eat any leftover popcorn!

RECYCLED WINDOW BEADS



Hang these beads in your window at Christmastime. They'll look pretty both to all of your family on the inside and to passers-by outside as well. Perhaps best of all, they're yet another decoration that recycles old materials from last Christmas—in this case, giftwrap—for this year's festive good looks.

Because it involved recycling, this is a project that requires either planning ahead or creating ahead. That is, either you planned ahead last year by saving your used Christmas wrapping paper, or else you can use this year's used wrapping paper to create beads in advance . . . for next Christmas.

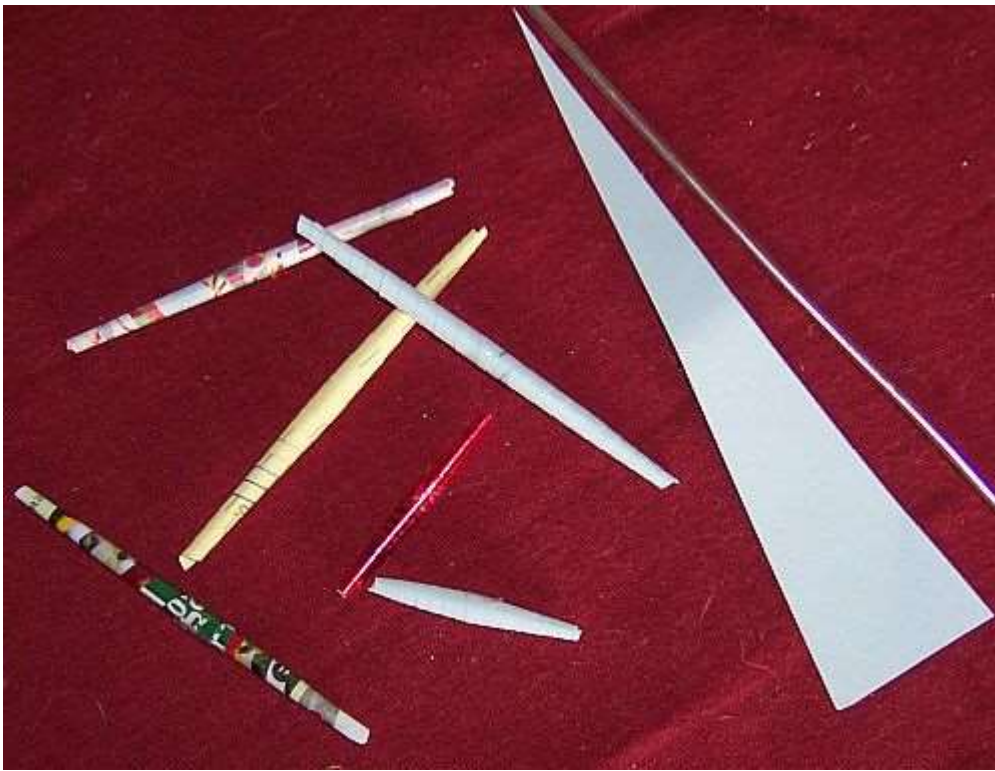
Of course, there's no real reason you can't use new wrapping paper . . . but you lose the virtuous feeling you get from recycling. I'd suggest saving as much wrapping paper as you can this year, waiting till the kids tire of their new toys, then giving them this as a project to do, in advance of next Christmas, the first time you hear the old familiar wail, "I'm boooored. There's nothing to dooooooo."

Approximate time needed: Each bead only takes a few minutes. The length of the entire project will depend on how long your strings are and how many of them you create

Ability/age level: Eight and up

Materials needed:

- Used Christmas wrap, preferably wrap that's predominantly red and green, perhaps with gold and/or silver accents
- Scissors
- Glue
- Toothpicks or wooden matchsticks with the heads removed
- Dental floss
- Needle



Procedure:

Cut long, pennant-shaped triangles from the Christmas wrap. The length of the short end of the triangle should be close to or equal to that of the toothpicks (or matchsticks, if you're using those instead). The taller the triangle the fatter the bead.

Place a toothpick along the fat end of one pennant shape and roll the paper tightly around the stick with the colorful side out.

When the entire triangle is rolled up, place a small dab of glue on the point, which will be on the outside when you're finished. This will seal and finish the bead.

Pull the toothpick out. That bead is finished . . . set it aside and move on to creating the next one.

When you have quite a quantity of them, thread a needle with a length of dental floss longer than one of your windows—you want the string of beads to drape a bit—and pass the needle through enough beads to fill it up.

When you're done stringing the beads, remove the needle, leaving the floss in place, and tie a knot in each end of the floss, large enough so the beads won't fall off.

Affix each end of the floss to the window frame . . . and start creating another string for another window.

(Below is an alternative bead design made from rolling tubes using long rectangular pieces of paper, and sellotape, which may be easier for younger children.)



MOCK STAINED-GLASS WINDOW



Stained glass windows are suitable for Christmas, especially if you want a reminder in your house that Christmas isn't just about Santa, snowmen, and presents. Here's a way you can give yourself a mock stained-glass window. Make sure you hang this on a window that gets plenty of sunlight streaming through it.

Approximate time needed: Less than half an hour

Ability/age level: Six and up with help cutting the construction paper

Materials needed:

- One piece of onion-skin typing paper
- One piece of colored construction paper
- Colored markers
- Glue
- Scissors



Procedure:

Cut out various irregularly shaped pieces from the construction paper. Do not in any case cut all the way to the edge. Carefully remove the pieces you've cut out without disturbing the remaining construction paper.

Glue one side of what remains of the construction paper and affix it to the onion-skin paper.

Using different colors of marker, color in the onion-skin paper wherever it shows through the construction paper.

MOCK STAINED-GLASS PICTURE OR ORNAMENT



If you don't have a suitable sunny window in which to hang the mock stained glass window, above—or even if you do—your family might enjoy creating this decoration, which can be hung on the wall, in a window, or from a doorknob. A variation of it, explained below, will result in your producing a “stained-glass” ornament.

Approximate time needed: From fifteen minutes to an hour depending on complexity of design and whether you choose the ornament option

Ability/age level: Nine and up

Materials needed:

- Small piece of lightweight cardboard (such as the backing from a legal notepad)
- A piece of aluminum foil a couple of inches larger than the cardboard
- A piece of plastic wrap a little bit larger than the aluminum foil
- Tape
- Colored and black markers
- Optional: Scissors
- Optional: Double-faced tape or glue
- Optional: Large, heavy needle and thread

Procedure:

Crumple the foil so it wrinkles, and cover the cardboard with it. Tape it in place in back.

Tape the plastic wrap to your work surface so that it's pretty taut.

Outline your picture or design in black marker on the plastic wrap. It can be a Christmas tree with a few balls or some lights on it, a Santa, a string of colorful ornaments, or an abstract design.

Color within the outlines with colorful markers.

When the picture is complete, lift up the wrap and tape it carefully over the foil.

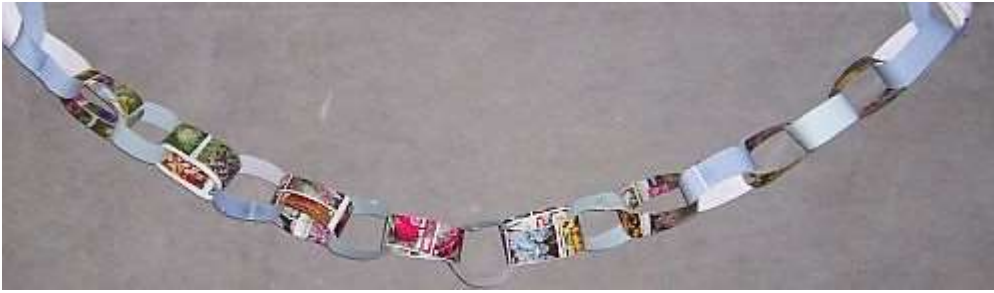
Optional procedure to make ornaments instead of pictures by this method:

If you prefer to create ornaments rather than a picture, cut the cardboard into circles, making two same-sized cardboard circles for each one ornament you want to create. Follow the rest of the directions as above. Your two circles do not need to depict identical or similar pictures, though they should be complementary.

When you have two circles complete, stick them together back-to-back with either double-faced tape or glue.

With a large, heavy needle, run a loop of thread through the top to form a hanger that's hook-free and safe around little kids.

CHRISTMAS CHAINS



Kids love making paper chains, and today recycling is big. Put the two together and you get . . . paper chains made out of recycled Christmas wrap. This is another of those projects that requires planning ahead . . . so save your sturdy Christmas wrap this year, and next year you can turn it into paper chains.

You can festoon the tree with chains, or drape them across windows, above doorways, or simply on walls. (Use the Removable Scotch tape—and press lightly. I've had ninety percent success in using it on walls without disturbing any paint.)

Approximate time needed: From just a few minutes for a short chain to hours for a very long chain or multiple chains of moderate length

Ability/age level: Pre-schoolers can make chains with just a little help; older kids won't need any help at all.

Materials needed:

- Scissors (beginners' scissors are okay)
- Christmas wrapping paper, preferably recycled used, in as many different patterns as you have
- Tape or glue

Procedure:

Cut a lot of strips of gift wrap. A good size is 1" x 6", but you don't have to cut exactly that size. You do want to keep the strips relatively uniform in size, though.

Form a circle out of one strip, keeping the patterned side out, overlapping one end over the other by half an inch to an inch. You can fasten the ends together either with glue or with tape.

Take another strip of paper of a contrasting pattern and link it through the first circle before attaching one end over the other in the same way.

Continue creating links in this way till you have a chain as long as you want. Make more chains, till you have as many chains as you want—or till you've run out of recycled gift wrap to work with.

TREE-MENDOUS INVITATION



This unusual invitation opens at the bottom instead of the top!

Approximate time needed: Ten to twenty minutes per invitation

Ability/age level: Able to use a scissors (beginners' scissors are okay) and to write

Materials needed:

- Pencil
- Colored markers
- One sheet of scrap paper
- One sheet of green construction paper for each two invitations
- Scissors (beginners' scissors are okay)

Procedure:

Place the scrap paper vertically (short ends at the top and bottom) in front of you on your work surface. Fold it in half from top to bottom and again from side to side.

On the quarter-sheet now showing, draw a Christmas tree, including a bit of trunk, as large as will fit on the quarter-sheet of paper.

When you're satisfied with your drawing, cut it out. This will be your pattern.

Place a sheet of green construction paper on your work surface facing you vertically and fold in half from bottom to top, so the short ends meet and the fold is toward you.

Place the Christmas tree pattern on the green construction paper. Be sure the bottom of the trunk is flush with the fold of the paper. Keep it as far to the left as you can. Trace around it with a pencil. When you're finished, put the pattern down on the right and trace around it again. You should have two trees side by side, with their trunks on the fold. Cut each tree out. Be sure to cut through both thicknesses of paper. Do not cut apart at the fold.

On the front of the invitations, color the trunks brown with marker, and decorate the trees with some colorful ornaments (round circles).

Unfold the invitation (at the point) and write the invitation information (your name, your address if the invitee doesn't know it, the date, and the time) inside.

THREE-D SANTA DECORATION



Instead of buying stickers to make your Christmas gifts more festive, why not make your own Santa-shaped package decorations? You can use them on at least a few of your gift boxes, perhaps the ones you're not using wrapping paper on. Got a gift box that came from the store in a pretty white box with a festive ribbon, and you don't want to rewrap it in gift wrap, yet you feel it needs a little touch more to put it in the holiday spirit? Here's the answer!

Approximate time needed: Fifteen minutes

Ability/age level: Nine and up

Materials needed:

- Pink construction paper
- Red construction paper
- Scissors
- Cotton
- Glue

Procedure:

Cut a circle out of the pink construction paper. This will be Santa's face. The size you make it will depend at least in part on the size of the package you're decorating.

Cut a stocking cap out of the red construction paper. Make it an appropriate size for the Santa face you've cut out.

Glue the hat onto the face circle.

Draw Santa's eyes with a blue marker. If you want, give him red lips, though not much of his mouth will show under his moustache and beard.

Trim his stocking cap with cotton. Glue it into place.

Cut more cotton to create a moustache and beard for Santa. Glue them into place too.

Optional: Just for good measure, give him rosy cheeks with a red marker, if you'd like.

Your Santa is now ready to be glued onto a package.

TANNENBAUM TOPPER



Because of the glitter on this decoration, intended to brighten your Christmas dinner, it's not recommended that you put it directly on the food. You don't want to risk getting glitter in your food. But if you serve a covered casserole, why not slip this "Christmas tree" over the knob of the lid?

Approximate time needed: Ten minutes

Ability/age level: Even little ones can create this, if a parent helps with the cutting and gluing.

Materials needed:

- Green construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Colored marking pens
- Glitter pen or glue and glitter

Procedure:

Holding a piece of construction paper vertically (that is, with one short side toward you), cut upward from each bottom corner to form a triangle whose point is about halfway up the paper.

Using various colors of markers, draw round circles on it to represent ornaments.

Glue the two cut sides together to form a tree (cone) shape out of the triangle.

Slip the tree over two fingers and lightly draw glitter garlands with a glitter pen. Or draw lines around it with the applicator nozzle of a bottle of glue (such as Elmer's) and then sprinkle glitter across the glue trail, shaking off the excess after it's dried.

Use your tannenbaum topper on the lid of a casserole dish to give a festive flair to your Christmas table.

APPEAL by author and illustrator [John L. D. Barnett](#)

Please do all you can to help.



Bahrain



Corporal John L D Barnett RMP

During 1970 I was a corporal in the Royal Military Police serving with the Combined Land Forces British Army on security duties on the island of Bahrain. My pal Pete and I hired a car one day and were driving through a newly developed housing estate called Isa Town which had been named after the Ruler of Bahrain. The car radio was blasting away to the sound of Simon and Garfunkel singing 'Mrs Robinson'. The Ruler, Sheikh Isa, had apparently donated a few million Dinars for new housing for the island's population, so we stopped the car to take a quick look around the new housing estate.

To our surprise we were approached by a pretty, young, English nurse who had come out of the front door of one of the already finished properties. She requested our help to carry a chest of drawers into the house

for her. Of course we obliged without hesitation. How could we not help a pretty nurse in distress? Once inside I was shocked to see so many small, underdeveloped and thin children, some in baby cots, and some lying on the concrete floor on mattresses, it was heart breaking.

The nurse informed us that all the children had been rescued from different areas of Bahrain Island. Some had been begging for food, and others were chained up like dogs and couldn't even speak.

One very tiny little girl was curled up in the corner rocking from side to side and Pete and I just stared at them in disbelief.

We just couldn't believe what we were seeing. "How could anyone treat little children like this?" I said. The sad look on their little faces said it all and from that moment on I just wanted to do all I could to help them. Pete and I spent all day moving what little furniture, beds, and tables the nurses had, along with medical supplies donated by the main Bahraini Hospital.

The makeshift wards consisted of two newly built houses joined into one, which had been donated by the Ruler, Sheikh Isa, but all the walls were chalky white and very bare, and as I stood there looking around I wondered how we could cheer up their lives and try to bring a smile back to their sad little faces.

The senior nurse in charge at the time was a lady of about forty years of age, who reminded me of Florence Nightingale, as she hadn't stopped working all day whilst caring for the needs of the children; and she looked like she had been run off her feet. I asked her if Pete and I could come back the following day and decorate the nursery walls with cartoon characters from the Disney scenes to brighten up the rooms for the children as I felt it was the very least I could do.

She agreed it would be a very good idea, and the following day we came back with different coloured paints and brushes, on loan from the Army Quarter Master's Stores at the camp. I was so pleased I could help brighten up their little lives with my artwork, and Pete and I set to work, spending hours on the drawings before starting the paintwork.

In between breaks we helped the nurses feed the children with a special vitamin milk food mix which had been made up for each individual child at the main hospital in Manama, to bring the children back to full health again. I just couldn't believe that a child of twelve years of age looked like a child of four years old and had to be placed in a cot until she was strong enough to stand on her feet again, which took months of dedicated care by the nurses due to the poor child's malnutrition.

I had taken a shine to one little girl whom the nurses had renamed 'Chips' because she was so small and frail, but she always managed a smile when she saw Pete or myself, though she was unable to speak. We would spend all of our off-duty hours playing with the children and singing to them, whilst we finished painting the walls.

I was called in to see our senior Warrant Officer, a short time after our first visit to the Children's Hospital in Isa Town and was informed that the Battalion Commander wished to see me. I was more surprised than my Unit Officer, who enquired as to the nature of the request by the Brigade Commander; but I couldn't supply him with the information at that stage as I was not aware of the circumstances myself.

I was marched in to see the Brigadier Brigade Commander who stood me at ease and spent a great deal of time singing my praises over the work we were carrying out at the Isa Town Awali Children's Hospital. He had ordered that a special Land Rover was to be placed at our disposal and any other materials we required to carry out the work.

My military duties at the camp were suspended until I was no longer required by the senior nurse at the children's hospital, who I found out later had made a telephone call to the Brigadier Commander to thank him for our help. As you can imagine, this didn't go down too well with the rest of the unit, who had to double up to cover all my security duties on the camp, but unfortunately had no choice but to follow orders.

Pete and I spent another fortnight painting the nursery in the children's hospital, and we were so proud of the end result. The children's faces said it all, and you could see in their eyes the pleasure they took from the cartoons. The walls were no longer plain and dull and every room had been decorated with scenes from the Disney films.

Job done, we said our goodbyes and informed the senior nurse that we would drop by from time to time to see how the children were doing and give them more assistance if it were required. We sadly left Isa Town and the Awali Children's Hospital and headed for Thompson Beach for a swim before taking the Land Rover back to the camp compound for the last time.



To this day I never forgot the look on the sad little faces of those unwanted and uncared for children, but Oh! how happy and proud I was that they were being loved and cared for and nursed back to health by those handful of dedicated British and Bahraini nurses.

Please remember this story and do everything you can to help save the lives and take care of all the little children around the world who only want to be given the same chance to grow up in the safe, warm, and loving environment that we all deserve.



THE CHILDREN OF BAHRAIN TODAY

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Action Against Hunger



Action Against Hunger (ACF International <http://www.actionagainsthunger.org/>), is a global humanitarian organization committed to ending world hunger. They work to save the lives of malnourished children while providing communities with access to safe water and sustainable solutions to hunger.

With 35 years of expertise in emergency situations of conflict, natural disaster, and chronic food insecurity, Action Against Hunger runs life-saving programs in over 45 countries, benefiting thirteen million people in 2014. Their focus is to save lives and restore communities, regardless of ethnicity, political preference, or creed.



<http://www.actionagainsthunger.org/take-action/donate>

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Anthology Contributors

[L. Sydney Abel](#)



L. Sydney Abel is the pen name of Lawrence Abel. He writes fiction founded on his personal experiences using that wonderful thing called 'imagination'.

Lawrence was born and raised in Kingston upon Hull; he is married and has two grown-up children. He attended Hull College, where he qualified as a TV/Electronics Engineer. His first dream was music; writing, playing and recording his own songs. During his children's early years, he invented his own stories. He didn't know it then, but story writing was to become his goal, his world and his new dream.

His short story *A Toadstool Tale* appeared in volume 1 of the Crimson Cloak Anthologies, *Glodwyn's Treasure Chest*.

<http://www.lsydneyabelbooks.com>

<http://lsydneyabel.weebly.com/>

<https://twitter.com/lsydneyabel>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/L-Sydney-Abel->

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/6202926.L_Sydney_Abel

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/lsydneyabel>

To find out about his other books, please visit lsydneyabelbooks.com

Adult: ***12:07 THE SLEEPING***

Children's: ***Timothy Other – the boy who climbed Marzipan Mountain***

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[John L. D. Barnett](#)



John L. D. Barnett served with the 24th Royal Artillery Missile Regiment in Germany, and then transferred to the Royal Military Police, serving in Germany, the Middle East and Hong Kong. Later he worked as Chief Security Officer for the King of Bahrain in the Persian Gulf. Arriving back in England in the early 70s, he sailed and worked on the Grimsby fishing trawlers as a 2nd Engineer, when the Cod Wars with Iceland were at their peak. He has been happily married to his wife June for 35 years, having raised two boys who now have children of their own.

After successful spells as an HGV Class 1 Petroleum Tanker Driver for Burmah Castrol, and Driver Foreman for Q8 Petroleum and successful property developer, he took up writing and illustrating books in his spare time and has so far completed twenty books. He is a canoe and Judo Club instructor.

He is the author of *The Sea is My Grave*, the Biography of his father Bill, who experienced the sinister events forming the account in *A Haunting War*, his short story in volume 4 of the *Crimson Cloak Anthologies*, *Consuming Tales*. He has also written two volumes of autobiography, *Yorkshire Rebel*, and *No Pain No Gain*.

John is the author and illustrator of the *Friz the Bee* series, *The Cloggs*, *Bertie the Barge*, and *The Adventures of Poppy the Dog* series published by Crimson Cloak Publishing, and illustrator of *The Legend of Tim Turpin* (written by Peter Bernfeld and published by Crimson Cloak Publishing).

In addition he has illustrated the following books written by Molly Hill, published by Sarah Book Publishing, USA:

If I Were a Crocodile

If I Were a Mermaid

If I Were a Fly

If I Were a Dog

If I Were a Skunk

If I Were a Super Hero

If I Were a Giant

If I Were a Dinosaur

If I Were a Butterfly

If I Were Invisible

As well as

Terrific Tales of Trembling Tim the Two Tone Tiger by Peter Bernfeld,

And *Bucky Berrott*, written by George E. Lander, published by Sarah Book Publishing, USA.

<http://johnbarnett590.wix.com/johns-new-web-site>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/John-L-D-Barnett/659436580826839>

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/johnldbarnett>

The *Friz the Bee* series, published by Crimson Cloak Publishing:



The Bee family members Grandad and Grandma Bee, their son, Fred Bee, his wife Honey Bee, and their six children, Friz, Bud, Bluebell, the twins Rose and Tulip, and last but not least, Baby Beni, all live in the Bee Hive at the edge of Willow Woods. Friz Bee is the eldest son and a Worker Bee who gets up to all sorts of mischief and finds himself in hot water on more than one occasion.

Releasing soon from Crimson Cloak Publishing:

The Bee Royal Wedding (*Friz the Bee* series)

Royal Bee Honeymoon (*Friz the Bee* series)

The Royal Twins (*Friz the Bee* series)

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[Peter N. Bernfeld](#)



Peter is an ex helicopter pilot, ex airline pilot, ex-restauranteur, and ex-hypnotherapist. He is the author of various sci-fi and historical fiction. His short story *The Kids of Granger's Bottom* appeared in volume 4 of the Crimson Cloak Anthologies, *Consuming Tales*. He has lived all over the world and now lives in Andover, UK.

<http://peterbernfeld.com/>

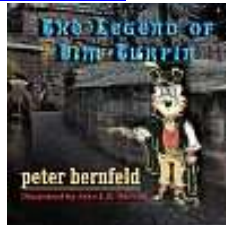
<https://www.facebook.com/peter.bernfeld>

<https://twitter.com/PeterBernfeld>

<http://blog.mailasail.com/troutbridge>

<https://uk.linkedin.com/pub/peter-bernfeld/2b/97a/a8>

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/peterbernfeld>



The Legend of Tim Turpin, Crimson Cloak Publishing

Peter N Bernfeld's clever tongue-in-cheek story of the famous thieving duo of tiger and horse will delight children and adults alike. It is amusingly illustrated throughout by John L D Barnett.

Also by Peter N. Bernfeld:

Afterdeath: A Barnikel and Fearnaught Occult Detective Thriller, Volume 1

Jogger in Black: Volume 2

Sing A Song of Saturn

Karno's Casebook

Kitty Cracks Case (Karno Book 1)

Polly Picked the Pistol Up (Karno Book 2)

The Kaieteur Caper (Karno Book 4)

The Poisoned Pastie (book 5)

Eliezer's Journey

Eliezer's Return

The Mysterious Dr. LeMesurier

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[Rosita Bird](#)



Rosita is married with two children. She has worked as a legal secretary, a childminder, nursery assistant, and as an accommodation provider for fostered teenagers. She attributes former health problems to not eating properly as a child, thus many of her books are aimed at encouraging healthy eating and have received positive feedback from Jamie Oliver's team.

<https://sites.google.com/site/rositabirdbooks/home>
<https://www.facebook.com/Rositaschildrensbooks>
<https://twitter.com/257361251bird>
<https://uk.linkedin.com/pub/rosita-bird/49/28b/833>
<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/rosita25>



By Rosita Bird:

Fruits Count

Vegetables Count

The Elf's Secret

Bobby's Magic Wheels

Illustrated by [Lynn Costelloe](#): *Emma Tate and the Magic Plate*, the first of the Emma Tate series,

The Rabbit Who Wore Glasses,

My Great-Grandad was a Soldier,

Mummy Still Loves Me,

Charlie, the Crocodile Who Couldn't Catch a Cold,

Jake Is Different.

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[Veronica Castle](#)

Veronica Castle lives in the High Pennines of northern England. She is the illustrator of *The Magic World of Bracken Lea* by [Esma Race](#), and *Little Bear's Trial* by Roger Bone, from Crimson Cloak Publishing.



Links to more information:

<http://crimsoncloakpublishing.com/veronica-castle.html>
<http://raceesma.wix.com/esma-race#!veronica-castle/c1tpe>
<http://www.farcourt.co.uk/ge/zentangle.html>
<https://www.facebook.com/esmarace>
<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/veronicacastle>

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[Janice Lewis Clark](#)



Bio: Janice Clark lives in the Pacific Northwest, where the morning fog drifting over the coastal hills could easily conceal dragons or any number of magical creatures. She and her brother share a home on partially wooded acreage, frequented by a variety of birds, deer, squirrels, rabbits, raccoons, the neighbor's free-range chickens, and several cats who hunt the area. She does not currently own (or is not owned by) a cat or any other four-footed being. Frequently-resident grandchildren and a large garden are sufficient to occupy any time not taken up by writing. Her short stories "The Dragon Said Moo", "A Slip In Time", "The Courtship of Gladys Pierson" and "The Apple Witch" appeared respectively in Volumes 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Crimson Cloak Anthologies, *Glodwyn's Treasure Chest*, *Steps In Time*, *Love Matters* and *Consuming Tales*.

Other publications include:

Fairy Gold (novelet prequel to Apprentice Healer series)

Molly the Beekeeper's Daughter and other stories (short story collection)

A Different Kind of Hero and other stories (short story collection)

A Brave Doll (picture book—free on website)

A Home Where God Lives: Discovering His Blessings [with Anita Donihue] (Christian /inspirational collection of prayers, poems, stories and essays exploring different types and aspects of "home")

<http://www.janiceclark.net>

<http://www.teawiththeblackdragon.blogspot.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/PrincessButtermilkBiscuit>

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/JanClark>

The *Hall of Doors* series:

Book one, *The Mountains of the Moon: Sammy's worried. Her cat has disappeared again. No one knows where Princess Buttermilk Biscuit goes on full-moon nights. Will she come back this time?*

When Sammy follows her cat up a moonbeam to a world of mist and moonlight, she meets Selena, who lives in a beautiful fairy-tale castle. Sammy is fascinated by the Hall of Doors with its magical portals to other worlds. But the dreamlike adventure turns into a nightmare when Sammy is faced with the hardest decision of her life. Will she have the courage to make the right choice?

Book two, *The Door in the Sky*

Book three, *The Mirror Door*

Book four, *The Secret Door*

Book five, *The Water Door*

Fairy Gold This is a “prequel” to the story of Teeka, Angelina’s daughter, in the *Apprentice Healer* series. The first chapter of *To Heal a Broken Planet* is included. Publication of that novel, and its sequel, *Into the Unknown*, is pending.

A Brave Doll

Other free materials on the website include “extra scenes” for the first three Hall of Doors books and an assortment of short material.

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[Lynn Costelloe](#)



Lynn Costelloe is married and lives in Sheffield. Her book *What Portia Peach Won't Eat* will be published by Crimson Cloak Publishing, along with books by Rosita Bird, illustrated by Lynn.

<http://lynncostelloe.weebly.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/LCostelloeArtist>

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100008565572379&fref=ts>

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/lynncostelloe>

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[Don Ford](#)



A Native American writer and an Environmentalist caring for the natural world of water, land, air, and all living things, Don has published works throughout the U. S. and Europe, Portugal and Cyprus in particular, with connections in 62 other countries. From 2006 to 2011, he was the Forum Moderator for both the Humor Forum and the Spiritual Forum for Readers Digest Magazine. He was also the named Storyteller for the New York State Parks and Recreation Dept. at the New York State Fair Aug./ Sept. 2011. His short story *Warrior Spirit* appeared in Volume 2 of the Crimson Cloak Anthologies, *Steps in Time*, and his poem *In Search of Another* in Volume 3, *Love Matters*.

<https://www.facebook.com/donford2013>

<http://tinyurl.com/14al233>

<http://www.awritercomestocall.webs.com>

http://www.linkedin.com/profile/view?id=44086905&trk=hb_tab_pro_top

<https://twitter.com/DonGreywolfFord?refsrc=email>

<https://www.facebook.com/awritercomestocall>

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/dgford>

Cave Land: No decent self-respecting modern homo sapiens should miss getting this Stone Age parody. This book rocks, or at least has its own share of rocks in it.

A Story Runs Through It

Adventure Road

Clay Pond and Other Fish Tales

Royal Ferdinand and Other Tales

Return to the Forest

Chilly, the Very Warm-Blooded Polar Bear

Raising Hope

Plight of the Butterfly - We have all heard stories about butterflies and read poems about the same. This book is presented to raise awareness of the serious Plight that butterflies are in today, especially the Monarch butterfly. Their numbers are dwindling, and more research is desperately needed to find out how to curb this tragedy, before it reaches a point of no return. Enjoy the stories, full color pictures, and poems presented here.

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[Barry Harper](#)



Barry left Secondary Modern School in Morley Leeds at the age of 15 in the early 1960s, and moved to Leighton Buzzard Bedfordshire to take up a five year apprenticeship in carpentry and joinery, obtaining his City and Guilds certificate. At the age of 20 he joined the British Army and served with 17TH Training Regiment Royal Artillery, before being posted to 24TH Missile Regiment Royal Artillery stationed in Paderborn Germany B.F.P.O.1. He served with 24th Missile Regiment as the Battery Carpenter, B11 equipment repairer, and was no 11 on the Honest John Missile Launcher, during which time he also obtained his B3 Signals qualifications. Whilst serving with the armed forces in Germany he married his wife Diane, and has been happily married for 47 years and with three now grown children. Retiring from the army in 1970 to start his own successful carpentry and joinery business and working all over Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, he finally retired in 2008 and his spare time is now taken up with coin collecting, and most recently with writing short stories.

<http://crimsoncloakpublishing.com/barry-harper.html>

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[Cynthia Macgregor](#)



Cynthia MacGregor lives in Palm Springs, Florida. She is a writer, editor, TV host and speaker and has written over 100 books: General nonfiction, Parenting books, Cookbooks / books about cooking, Kids' books, and Fiction. Her books *Recipes for Fun* and *Holiday Decorating Ideas for the Whole Family* will be published by Crimson Cloak Publishing.

<http://www.cynthiamacgregor.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cynthia-MacGregor/447193185323072>

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/CynMac>



From Crimson Cloak Publishing:
Don't Quit While You're Ahead
Affirmations

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[Lynne North](#)



Lynne North is a children's author who lives in the north west of England, where she works as a data analyst for one of the local Health Authorities. A lifelong reader, she has written several award-winning children's novels and magazine articles. Her novel "*Be Careful What you Wish For*" will be releasing soon from Crimson Cloak Publishing.

Also by Lynne North:

Caution: Witch in Progress

Zac's Destiny

Unlucky For Some

Synopsis of *Be Careful What you Wish For*:

Finn is a bored young leprechaun. He lives with his mum and dad in a small village named Duntappin, and goes to the local school there. He spends most of his free time with his best friend Dallan, but craves some excitement in his life. Unfortunately, Finn missed out on being blessed by the Good Luck Fairy and soon gets far more than he bargained for. He finds himself a long way from home in the hands of a travelling circus where he is little more than a 'freak' to amuse the customers.

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/Lynne.North.Author>

<http://www.lynnenorth.co.uk/>

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/LynneNorth>

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[Esma Race](#)



Esma Race was born and raised in the small Cheshire village of Weaverham. She has a great love for the natural world, and has always been able to sense the nature spirits which feature in her Bracken Lea stories. She is very interested in natural healing, and is a practising reflexologist in the North of England, where she now

lives with Geoff, her husband of 45 years. She is a mother, grandmother and great-grandmother and enjoys reading, walking, travelling, gardening, and English history.

Her short story "*Horrid Rex Bites the Dust*" appeared in Volume 1 of the Crimson Cloak Anthologies *Glodwyn's Treasure Chest*; "*The Eternal City*" was in Volume 2, *Steps in Time*, "*The Search*" appeared in Volume 3, *Love Matters*, and "*A Trio of Friends*" in *Consuming Tales*, volume 4.

She is the author of:

The Traveller (short story),

The Magic World of Bracken Lea, from Crimson Cloak Publishing.



"Discovering the Magic World of Bracken Lea was a treat"

--Long and Short Reviewer

"... adorable ... After two stories I was hooked."

--OnlineBookClub Reviewer

<http://www.esmarace.co.uk>

<https://www.facebook.com/esmarace>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/esmarace>

https://twitter.com/Esma_Race

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/8020628.Esma_Race

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/esmarace>

Synopsis of *The Magic World of Bracken Lea*:

A series of short stories featuring the Fairy Folk of Bracken Lea Wood: a tale of Nature Spirits for humans of all ages.

Welcome to the magic world of GLODWYN the Gnome. His friends include other gnomes, flower fairies, a Twisted Tree, Astrid the Fairy Queen, and the birds and animals who also live in the wood.

Glodwyn the gnome is a bit of a rebel. He lives and works in the ancient woodland. He is unusual amongst the Fairy Folk in enjoying the company of humans. His good-natured interest in their world seen through the eyes of his unknowing "friend", Walter the Stacker Truck Driver at the local factory, leads him to interfere in their affairs, with interesting results both for the Fairy Folk and humans. With his help, the Fairy Folk rescue a little boy from drowning, save the life of an injured cat and later that of a confused old lady who collapses in the Wood.

The Fairy Folk raise the alarm when a baby's mother is taken ill, and later prevent disaster at the baby's Christening, when a bad fairy threatens the child's happiness. They help a Leprechaun find his way home, and get a lost engagement ring back to its owner. Both unwitting humans and Fairy Folk work together to save nearby woodland from development. From arranging a litter-pick in the woods to finding a new wand for the Fairy Queen, it is a busy life for the Fairy Folk.

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[Gary Winstead](#)



Gary Winstead, the youngest of eleven children, was born in 1948 and grew up in Pontiac, Illinois, an obscure farm town in the middle of the Illinois Corn Belt. At the age of eighteen, he joined the United States Marine Corps and served for four years, rising to the rank of corporal (E-4) before earning his honorable discharge. He went on to receive a bachelor's degree in physical education, a master's in educational administration from California State University, Fullerton and a PhD in Veterinary Science. He has been married to Faye, the love of his life, for forty-five years and has three stepchildren, all grown, and four grandchildren.

He is the author of *So You Want to be a Marine* (autobiography), the short stories *Diablo Blanco* in the second Crimson Cloak Anthology *Steps In Time* and *Frogmore International* in volume 4, *Consuming Tales*, and is the award-winning director of a short film adapted from his story *The Pony No-one Could Ride* which appeared in *Glodwyn's Treasure Chest*, Volume 1 of the Crimson Cloak Anthologies. He is currently working on *Riding through life with Love by my Side: "A Story of a Cowboy and His Wife's Journey Through Alzheimer's"*.

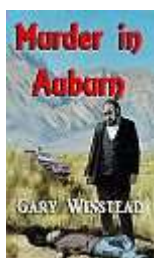
<http://savingliteracy.blogspot.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/winsteadgary>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/371850629606243/>

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/winsteadgrw>

From Crimson Cloak Publishing:



Detective Novel ***Murder in Auburn:***

When diminutive rodeo cowboy Trell Johnson is killed trying to protect a girl from her attacker, the authorities in Auburn try for a quick fix to prevent bad publicity for the rodeo competition. His friends take matters into their own hands, but the apparent indifference of the police hides corruption in high places. Detective Mark Wilson survives an attempt on his life and smells a rat when he is given extended "recuperation" leave. What is the connection between the mysterious death of a local investigative reporter and the personable mayor of the little town? Why is he trying to oust Chief of Police Markland in such a hurry, and can police and cowboys unravel the mystery before they run out of eye witnesses?

Part of the new Crimson Shorts short story range:

A Dream Come True

The Chukar Fiasco

Kippy

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<http://crimsoncloakpublishing.com>

Check out our Children's Corner, where you will find free downloadable children's coloring pages and crafts.

<http://crimsoncloakpublishing.com/children-s-corner.html>

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