

# the legend of the woodman and the little stranger

Once upon a time, many years ago, there lived a woodman and his family in a little cottage deep in the forest.

When Christmas Eve came, the family sat down to a meagre meal, but their spirits were rich with gratitude that they had anything to eat, and a roof over their heads against the snow-storm raging outside. They were grateful too, for the fire burning briskly in the grate.

As they were partaking of their thin soup there was a gentle knock on the door.

"Who, I wonder," said the woodman, "is coming to see us on such a bitter night?" But he opened the door, letting the snowflakes blow in. There stood a child,

pale and tired and shivering in ragged clothes. The family quickly brought him in, put warm, dry clothes on him and gave him some hot soup and bread. Then the woodman's wife, a kindly soul, gently put him to bed on the cot where her son usually slept.

After a time the whole family went to bed. During the night they were awakened by the sound of singing, the most beautiful to fall on mortal ears, for when they looked out the window they saw it was coming from a choir of angels!

In the center of the choir stood the little boy, dressed in splendid robes, and around him a radiance which out-dazzled the white

snow about him.

Awed by the spectacle, the woodman and his family knew at once that the little visitor was the Christ Child, and bowed in reverence.

Breaking a branch from a fir tree the Child set it in the ground, saying, "Because of your goodness to me, this branch will become a tree. It will always be green and will bear fruit at Christmas, and you will always be blessed with plenty at that season."

And so, every Christmas after that, the woodman and his family enjoyed delicious fruit heaped high on their table, the gift of the Christ Child.



## Why the Christmas Tree Wears Icicles and Tinsel

One of the most beloved stories is about the little spiders and how they helped trim the tree.

According to the old tale, one Christmas morning after the tree had been trimmed, it reposed there in all its glory, awaiting the children.

Every old house (and many a new) has spiders; curious creatures that they are, they wanted to see the lovely tree, too... not just from the floor, but up close. So they crept all over it until they had satisfied themselves completely that the tree was indeed a wondrously beautiful thing. But as they crept, they left cobwebs... beautiful, also, to Nature's eyes, but not so attractive to mothers.



Hope you and your family share an old-fashioned Christmas decked with friendship, fellowship, festivity.

Malheur Memorial Hospital

When the Christ Child came to bless the tree, he realized that the mother of the household would be dismayed. So He touched the webs... and they all turned to silver.

Ever since that time, Christmas trees are hung with shining tinsel.

Shining icicles are also part of the pretty Christmas picture. Another old story gives a reason.

One wintry night the Christ Child was wandering through a forest. It was cold and he knew he must find shelter for the night. The trees were bare. But a pine tree with low-hanging branches offered some protection from the wind.

When the pine tree, with its prescience that is known only to God, realized it was caring for the Christ Child, tears of joy fell from its branches. As they fell, they froze into icicles.

In the morning the pine tree had been transformed into a vision of dazzling brilliance.

And that is why at Christmastime we trim the tree with icicles.



## Piñata Fun Gets Break

A joyous Christmas mas tradition for Mexican boys and girls is the breaking of the piñata, a decorated earthen jar.

Sometimes, the piñata may be a caricature of people or animals.

The piñata is suspended by a rope that can raise or lower it. Each child is blindfolded and usually given three chances to poke at the piñata with a stick.

When it's broken, the piñata releases a bounty of delicious fruits, sweets, nuts and toys.

The children scramble to claim as many goodies as possible.

## a Spanish Indian miracle play

Los Pastores, a Spanish-Indian play, is given in Texas each year. It is given by every-day people who work for a living, and find time to act at odd hours.

The rehearsals take place secretly in someone's back yard... and the play is performed in someone's back yard, unpublicized, unheralded. The objective is that no one shall see the miracle play just from mere curiosity; spirituality is the raison d'être.

Introduced into Mexico by Spanish monks, it is given on Christmas to Candelmas by an amateur group gathered by invitation from house to house.

The scene: at one end of the yard an altar of wood covered with black sateen, the background for the manger scene. On the steps, the family's prize possessions, while above ceilings are decked with rose-entwined crepe paper. In the center of the lowest step is the Christ Child, a life-size doll, placed on a platter of colorful candies; nearby are creatures of the Manger, of odd sizes and shapes.

Opposite this scene, at the other end of the yard is a tent with volcanoes, devils, fire. From it "live devils" emerge.



When the play begins, a girl comes out, dressed as an angel, and recites. Then come shepherds, in pink coats with tinsel braid, a beaded valise over the shoulder, hung on broad red ribbon. The shepherds car-

ry gaily ornate staffs, and chant a song which goes on and on. Behind them, Ermilano, which as his name suggests, is a hermit; he is a comic character, and represents the good of the world, the soul on its earthly journey. Sometimes the Archangel Gabriel accompanies him.

Behind him come seven devils, six in sequined black and masks of animals, and then Satan in

bright red; all wear sparklers in their caps.

There is no formal end to the performance. The devils are vanquished, and the shepherds kiss the Child. A wild Indian enters and a fight ensues. He is overcome, and he kisses the Child. Then all solemnly and slowly approach the altar and pay respects to the Child. Candy and food are offered.



## Christmas Cheer



Good friends, good times - all the bounty of the Season to you!

TWILIGHT CAFE & LOUNGE

Fred and Jenny Bennett



For a Merry Christmas

For you, we prescribe good wishes, glad greetings and much gratitude.

Nyssa Rexall Pharmacy

George and Jan Patterson



It's that time of year when homes are aglow with festive decorations and sounds of Noel fill the air... a time to pause and think of our many wonderful friends. Merry Christmas to everyone!

Nyssa Co-op Supply



Joy to the world, it is the season of Christ's birth, rich in love and peace. We wish you a full share of holiday joy. Grateful thanks to all.

HOME DAIRIES OF OREGON, INC.

Our Christmas message to you:

As this year comes to a close, we want to express our thanks for your loyal patronage and our wish that your Christmas will be the most joyous you have ever known...

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