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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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## Why Santa Claus Was Late

Do you remember the Christmas when Santa Claus was very late? You may not have known the reason for this, so I will tell you.

He actually started out very early that year so that everyone might have their presents on Christmas Day. The first place he stopped was on the roof of a large house. Taking the big pack from his sleigh, he disappeared down the chimney.

But no sooner was he out of sight than the queerest little creatures appeared. They came from behind the blinds, jumped to the roof from under the eaves, and even emerged out of the waterspout.

These creatures wore green jackets and red hoods drawn tightly about their little round faces. Their legs and pointed feet were covered with red leggings. They were the goblins, dressed for winter.

The goblins looked through the bags on Santa's sleigh. One said, "Not a thing for us!"

"There weren't any last year or the year before that," said another.

"We'll have something this year," said one goblin, hopping onto the horns of a reindeer. "Let's take his sleigh and help ourselves!"

They scrambled into the sleigh, onto the backs of the reindeer, and even onto their horns. With their pointed shoes, they poked the reindeer, and off they went like

the wind—into the valley, over the mountains, and into the woods to the house where the goblins held their meetings.

The goblins jumped to the ground and tied the head reindeer to a tree. Then, you should have seen them unload the sleigh! Books were tossed one way and dolls another, until the ground was strewn with tops, balls, baby carts, and all sorts of toys.

When they came to the oranges and candy, they called out, "Here are the good things!"

Quickly, they scampered into the house, placing the treats on the table, which they soon filled with all the nice things Santa had packed for the children.

By and by, the goblins inside the house heard a loud noise. When they went to the door, a train of toy cars rushed by, filled with goblins, and bumped into a tree, sending goblins flying in all directions.

Another group of goblins perched on a rocking horse, while others gathered around a picture book, looking at it with great interest.

"Come in and eat the good things before Santa Claus finds us!" the goblins in the house called. Everything was dropped, and all the goblins ran inside.

They were seated around the table, just tasting the nice things, when a tap was heard on the door. A fairy entered.

"Wait!" she said, holding up her wand, and every goblin stood up.

"Do you know," the fairy said to them, "that you will cause a great deal of sorrow in the world by taking Santa Claus's sleigh and eating all the candy, nuts, and

other things you've taken? Children are waiting for their Christmas, and you will spoil it unless you put everything back in the sleigh just as you found it and return it to Santa Claus."

"You are always boasting that you help make people happy, and here you are, doing the very thing that will make thousands unhappy."

The goblins looked at each other. Then one said, "I think the fairy is right."

"It isn't Santa who will suffer—it's the children," said another.

"We never thought of that," added a goblin. "We'll put everything back."

"How they worked! They had to pick up all the toys they had thrown on the ground and carry all the fruit, candy, and nuts back from the table.

It was midnight by the time they had finished. Just as they were untying the

reindeer, Santa came through the woods. He was out of breath, for he had been running, following the tracks of the reindeer. That was how he found them.

When the goblins saw him, they ran into the house as fast as they could and hid.

"So, this is the trouble,"

Santa said to himself. "They

wanted Christmas presents. I'll train next year to make something they will like."



“My!” he exclaimed, looking at his watch. “I shall be later than ever this year!” He picked up the reins, and off they flew.

And that is why Santa Claus was late.