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The Fairy Christmas

Etheldred B. Barry

It was Christmas Day, and Toddy and Tita were alone.

Papa and Mamma had gone out West to visit their big brother, who was ill. They had promised to be home for Christmas, but a heavy snowstorm had blocked the railroad track, and Nurse was afraid the train would be delayed until the day after Christmas.

What a dull Christmas for two little girls — all alone in the great city house, with only the servants! They felt so lonely that Nurse let them play in the big drawing room instead of the nursery. They arranged all the chairs in a long row and pretended it was a snow-blocked train. Tita was the conductor, and Toddy was all the passengers.

Just as they were in the middle of it, they heard music in the street. They ran to the window and saw a little boy outside, singing and beating a tambourine.

"Why," said Tita, "his feet are all bare!"

"I 'spect he hung up *both* his stockings *and* his shoes," said Toddy.

"Let's open the window and ask him!"

But the great window was too high to reach, so they took Papa's cane and pushed it up. The little boy smiled, but they couldn't hear what he said, so they beckoned him in and ran to open the big front door.

He was a little frightened at first — but the carpet felt warm to his poor bare feet.

He told them his name was Guido, and that he had come from Italy, which is a much warmer country than ours. He was very poor — so poor that he had no shoes and had to go singing from house to house for a few pennies to buy his dinner. And he was so hungry.

"Poor little boy!" said Tita. "Our Mamma is away, and we're having a pretty sad Christmas ourselves — but we'll try to make it nice for you."

So they played games, and Guido sang to them. Then the folding doors rolled back, and there was the dining room with the table all set, and Thomas the waiter smiling, just as if it had been a grand dinner party instead of two very small girls. Nurse said, "Well, I never!" when she saw Guido — but she felt so sorry for the lonely little girls that she let him sit right down at the table.

And such a dinner as he ate. He had never had one like it before. "It is a fairy tale," he said.



Just as dessert came on, the door burst open and in rushed Mamma and Papa — the train had gotten through after all! They were so happy to find their darlings cheerful and busy instead of moping that they gave them each some extra kisses. And you may be sure that little Guido never went hungry or barefoot again after that. Long afterward, he would say: "That was a fairy Christmas."

That night, after Tita had said her prayers, she said:

"Mamma, I know something. Whenever you feel sad and lonely, if you will just find somebody sadder and lonelier than yourself and cheer them up — it makes you all right."

And I think that was the very best kind of Christmas lesson of love. Don't you?

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