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The Tricycle

Maud Lindsay

A little boy's mother and father made up their minds to give him a tricycle for a Christmas present; but of course, they did not tell him.

They knew that he wanted one, because whenever he talked about Christmas and what he hoped he would get, he always said a tricycle. Sometimes it was a ball and a horn and a tricycle that he wanted, or sometimes it was a train and a picture-book instead of a ball and a horn, but no matter how much he changed his mind about the other things, he never changed it about the tricycle.

His mother told his father about it one night after the little boy had gone to bed, and Father said:

"There are sure to be tricycles at the Toy Shop. I'll buy one tomorrow, but I will not bring it home yet."

So the next night as soon as the little boy had gone to bed, Mother asked:

"Oh, Father, did you remember to see about the tricycle?"

"Indeed I did," said Father, "and the Toy-Lady is going to keep it till we are ready for it."

After that, whenever the little boy talked about Christmas and what he wanted, Mother and Father would smile at each other over his head. And when he was in bed and asleep they would plan how Father could get the tricycle home without the little boy seeing it, and where it must be hidden. Father thought the basement would be the best place to put it, but Mother thought the coat-closet under the stairs would be still better.

"You can get it in there without making any noise," she said, "but you must be careful. All the fun would be spoiled if he were to find out before Christmas that we had bought the velocipede."

The little boy went to meet his father almost every evening, but on the day before Christmas when it was nearly time for him to start, Mother said:

"Oh, little son, don't you want to run into the kitchen and cut out biscuits for cook?"

The little boy liked to cut out biscuits, and he could do it so well and so quickly

that he cut enough to fill a pan in such a short time that when Cook saw them she could scarcely believe her eyes.

"I hurried so I could go to meet Father," he told his mother.

"But I wish you would shell this ear of popcorn, and then when Father comes we can pop it and string it for the Christmas tree," said Mother. The little boy was glad to do that. He liked to shell corn as well as he liked to cut out biscuits. He shelled a bowlful before he stopped.

It was too late to go to meet Father then, but the little boy said he would watch for him at the front door.



"I can see him a long way off," he said to his mother; but she had a skein of beautiful purple wool to wind into a ball, and she asked him to hold it for her. "This is for the very last stitches in Grandmother's Christmas shawl, and you will be helping me to finish it," she said as she put the skein on his hands.

Mother took a long time to wind the wool, but the little boy did not get tired. He liked to watch the soft bright threads as they slipped from his hands; and he was very careful not to let the skein fall. Just as the winding was finished, Mother heard the front door opened and shut ever so quietly. There was hardly any noise at all, but the little boy heard, too.

"There's my father," he said, running toward the hall, and if Mother had not thought of something else for him to do that very second, he would have gone out and seen the velocipede.

"Quick! Quick! hide behind the bed and I'll tell Father to look for you," she called, and that brought him back.

He was hidden away and as still as a mouse when Father came into the room by and by. No sooner had he opened the bedroom door than Mother called:

"If you want your little boy, you'll have to find him." And Father looked in all sorts of ridiculous places; in Mother's work-bag, in the waste-paper basket, under the rocking chair, and behind the pillows on the bed.

"What! Not here!" he said. "Then I must look in my slippers."

The little boy could not keep from laughing when he heard that, and there was no hiding from Father then.

"Well! Well! Well!" he said, "I'm glad I found you before Christmas!" And he and Mother smiled at each other as if they were delighted about something. But the

little boy did not dream that it was because the tricycle was safely hidden in the coat-closet under the stairs.

He was just as surprised as he could be when he spied it at the foot of the Christmas tree next morning.

His Grandmother had sent him a picture-book, and he got a ball and a train, too, but none of his presents pleased him so much as the tricycle that Mother and Father gave him.

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