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A Letter to Santa Claus and the Answer

Mary Graham Bonner

"I saw such a poor little boy today," Daddy began, settling back in his chair.

Jack and Evelyn looked up.

"He was standing at a shop window full of toys, and great tears were rolling down his face. I went over and spoke to him. For a moment he couldn't answer, but then, between sobs, he began to tell me about his life."

The boy, whose name was Harry Armstrong, had lost his father earlier that year. A few months later, his mother had married a man who was cruel and idle. As soon as the new stepfather had spent the family's savings, he told Harry he'd have to beg or steal for his food — he wasn't going to be bothered with him. Harry's mother was too frightened to say a word.

Harry had always had a warm home before: a good fire, plenty to eat, school every day. He would not beg. He would not steal. So one night when he came home empty-handed, his stepfather pushed him out of the house. Since then Harry had been sleeping at a school friend's, but he couldn't stay much longer — the boy's family was far too poor to take in another child for long.

The cold was hard. But what Harry felt most of all, Daddy told them, was that Santa Claus didn't know where he was, and that he would have no Christmas.

"Let's write to Santa right away!" said Evelyn. "What's his name, Daddy?"

"His name is Harry Armstrong. And you can tell Santa to bring his presents here, for I've told Harry he can stay with us a while and do a few odd chores."

So Evelyn wrote her letter: *Dear Santa — A poor little boy named Harry Armstrong is afraid he'll have no Christmas. Please, dear Santa, send him a warm suit, an overcoat, a sled, some skates, and lots of candy. Your loving Evelyn.*

Jack and Evelyn had just gone to bed when Daddy walked quietly into their room, holding a note with a small speck of soot on it — the stamp of the North. Evelyn tore it open and read aloud:



Dear Evelyn — I won't forget Harry Armstrong on Christmas. And you were very dear to think of someone else who needed a Christmas. Your friend, Santa Claus.

"Hurrah!" shouted Jack and Evelyn together.

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