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The Two Little Mice's Christmas Eve Party

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A little mouse had been hiding in a crack in the corner of the room one evening when he overheard something extraordinary: all the boys and girls in the world, once a year, had a tree hung with goodies, and a dear old person called Santa Claus came and trimmed it and filled their stockings while they slept.

The little mouse thought about this for a long time. Then he went and found his friend.

"There is no reason," he said, "why we shouldn't have a Christmas too."

Together they made a plan. They bored two small holes in the wall of the parlour where they'd heard the tree would be set up, and they settled in to wait — night after night, very quietly — listening to the children talk about what they hoped Santa would bring and watching them send their letters up the chimney.

The hardest part was staying out of the pantry. They managed it, though, sustained entirely by the thought of their Christmas party.

At last Christmas Eve arrived. Through their little holes, the mice watched the children pad downstairs in their nightgowns, hang up their stockings by the fireplace, and trot off to bed. Then the house went quiet.

Before long they heard strange noises on the roof, and a little soot came down the chimney. Then a jolly old man appeared — white hair, white beard, an enormous bag — and they nudged each other: *That must be Santa Claus.*

It was. And he set to work at once.



First he trimmed the tree. He had plenty of silver tinsel and candles; but best of all — from the mice's point of view — he began stringing popcorn along the branches until the tree looked as though snow had fallen over it. Then he tied on candy canes and candy animals. Then he filled the stockings: nuts, raisins, and big rosy-cheeked apples going in by the handful.

The toys didn't interest the mice at all. They had eyes only for the food.

Before long Santa was done, and he disappeared quickly back up the chimney. And then — the mice began their feast.

What a time they had. They ate until they could eat no more, and they agreed that Christmas was the finest time of the year — because never before had they found themselves sitting in front of food they were no longer hungry enough to finish.

The next morning, when the children came downstairs and found nutshells and popcorn scattered across the floor, they knew at once that some small guests had helped themselves. But they didn't set a trap. They thought it was perfectly fine that the mice had had a Christmas party too.

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