Enid Blyton®

CHRISTMAS TALES

Illustrations by Mark Beech



HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS

This collection first published in Great Britin in 2016 by Hodder & Stoughton
This reissue edition published in 2021

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Enid Blyton® and Enid Blyton's signature are registered trade marks
of Hodder & Stoughton Limited
Text © 2016 Hodder & Stoughton Limited
Cover and interior illustrations by Mark Beech. Illustrations © 2016
Hodder & Stoughton Limited

No trade mark or copyrighted material may be reproduced without the
express written permission of the trade mark and copyright owner.

The moral right of the author has been asserted.

All characters and events in this publication, other than those clearly
in the public domain, are fictitious and any resemblance to real persons,
living or dead, is purely coincidental.

All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,
or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission
in writing of the publisher, nor be otherwise circulated in any form of binding
or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition
including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978 1 444 93113 6

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

The paper and board used in this book are made from
wood from responsible sources.



Hodder Children's Books
An imprint of Hachette Children's Group
Part of Hodder & Stoughton
Carmelite House,
50 Victoria Embankment,
London, EC4Y 0DZ

An Hachette UK company
www.hachette.co.uk
www.hachettechildrens.co.uk

One Christmas Eve



One Christmas Eve

ONE CHRISTMAS EVE something most extraordinary happened to Father Christmas. Two of his reindeer were new ones and didn't know one chimney from another – and suddenly his sleigh drew up beside a tall factory chimney!

Well, of course, it is no good going down a factory chimney, because there are never any children below with stockings to be filled. But Father Christmas was so used to his reindeer stopping at all the right chimneys that he didn't even look to see if this was a proper one.

'Out we get!' he said to himself, heaving at his

enormous sack. 'Stand still, reindeer, till I come back. My, what a pitch-dark night!'

He groped about for the chimney and found the rim. He lowered himself into it, and then, just as he usually did, he let himself go. He thought he would slip down the chimney a little way and then come to a fireplace.

Instead, he fell down and down and down at a most alarming speed! The chimney was very tall indeed, very dark inside, and rather smelly. Father Christmas lost his red hat trimmed with white fur. His coat caught on a jutting nail, and was ripped off his back. It broke his fall, though, and when he at last landed at the bottom of the big factory chimney he only got a jolt and bump that made him gasp and sit down suddenly.

He felt himself all over. 'I'm not hurt. I've still got my sack. But I've lost my hat and my coat. Oh, dear – I must look a dreadful sight, without a coat, and all dirty and sooty. How do I get out of here?

That must have been a factory chimney!'

He tried all the doors, but they were locked. So he opened a window and climbed out, pulling his sack behind him.

And then suddenly a loud voice hailed him and a bright lantern flashed its light in his sooty face.

'Hey, you there! What are you doing in that factory! And what have you got in that sack?'

It was a policeman! Father Christmas wasn't afraid of them because he had never in his life done anything wrong, and he liked them. But he really felt very awkward indeed at that moment, climbing out of a factory window.

'Er – it's all right, policeman,' he said. 'I'm – er – well, I'm Father Christmas, to tell you the truth.'

'That's a fine tale!' said the policeman in a disbelieving voice. 'Can't you think of a better one than that? Father Christmas indeed! You look more like a chimney sweep! Open up that bag! I shall want you to give me the contents *and* come along to the

police station with me!'

Father Christmas stared at him in horror. Give up his precious sack of toys – so that the children couldn't have any? Spend the night in prison? No, no, he couldn't possibly do that. He tried again.

'My good man, I'm telling the truth. I've had an accident and come down the wrong chimney – but I really *am* Father Christmas! Can't you see my reindeer up there?'

The policeman couldn't. He didn't even bother to look. He made a grab at Father Christmas and his sack!

Father Christmas ran for his life, and the policeman thundered behind him. Father Christmas came to a little gate, darted through it and hid behind a bush. The policeman missed the gate and went on – but Father Christmas knew he would soon be back! Whatever was he to do?

He went to the little house nearby, and peeped through a window. He saw two children in bed, with a

little night-light shining beside them. He tapped at the window softly.

The children awoke. They sat up. Father Christmas tapped the pane again and called softly.

'It's me – Father Christmas. Let me in.'

The boy and the girl looked at one another in delight. Father Christmas! What a wonderful thing!

'He couldn't get down our chimney! I told you it was too small,' said the boy, and slid out of bed. 'I'll let him in.'

He opened the window wide and Father Christmas climbed in, shutting the window behind him. He was very glad to be out of the way of that angry policeman.

But the children didn't like the look of him at all. Where was his red hat and red coat? Why was he so dirty? They looked at him, scared.

'Shh! Don't be frightened,' said Father Christmas. 'I came down the wrong chimney and lost my coat and hat and got dirty. Look – I'll open my sack,

then you'll know I really *am* Father Christmas! All my toys are here!'

So they were! The sack was crammed absolutely full of toys of all kinds. The children gazed at them in the greatest delight.

'Poor Father Christmas,' said the girl, patting his arm. 'I'm sorry you came down the wrong chimney. Would you like a wash?'

The heavy tread of the policeman was heard outside. 'That's a policeman who thinks I'm a burglar,' said poor Father Christmas. 'Could you hide me, do you think – just till he goes?'

'Get into that cupboard,' said the boy. 'There's plenty of room for you. Quick! The policeman is knocking at the front door.'

So he was! Soon the children's parents were opening it in surprise, and listening to the policeman. 'The burglar may be hiding somewhere in your house,' he said. 'His footsteps go through your gateway! May I search, please?'

So he hunted all through the house – but he didn't look in the cupboard in the children's room, because the children's mother was quite, quite sure no one could get in there without being seen.

'The children would see a burglar if he got into their room and hid in the cupboard,' she said. 'They would call out in fright.'

The policeman gave up the hunt and went away. The children's parents went back to bed. And at last the cupboard door opened and Father Christmas looked out at the children, smiling.

'Thank you!' he said. 'I'll wash now. I only wish I could borrow a red hat and coat. I don't feel right without them!'

'Daddy's got one,' said the little girl. 'He went to a Christmas party – a fancy dress one – and he dressed up as Father Christmas. Borrow his coat and hat – they are just right, red, trimmed with white fur.'

Well, they fitted Father Christmas beautifully, and soon, washed and clean, and dressed up in proper

Christmassy clothes again, he was ready to go.

'Thank you very, very much for all your help,' he said to the two children. 'I don't know what I would have done without you. I'll go now.'

'Where are your reindeer?' asked the little girl.

'Somewhere up in the sky, wondering why I don't climb out of that factory chimney!' said Father Christmas. 'I'll whistle them down.'

He gave a peculiar whistle, and almost at once there came the sound of jingling bells, and down from the sky came the reindeer, drawing the sleigh behind them.

Father Christmas got in and set his big sack carefully down beside him. He spoke sternly to his reindeer.

'You two new ones aren't thinking what you are doing! Listen to what the older ones say, and don't stop at the wrong chimneys!'

He waved to the children. 'Goodbye! I shall have to hurry now or I'll never get finished before dawn.

Thank you again for your help. I'll send these clothes back as soon as I can.'

Off he went into the air, the reindeer galloping swiftly, their bells jingling as they went. The sound grew fainter and fainter – and then the children could hear it no longer. They went back to bed, excited.

'To think we were able to help old Father Christmas like that!' said the boy. 'What will the other children say when we tell them?'

'We'd better not say a word,' said the little girl. 'They just wouldn't believe us! I say – look – he's forgotten to fill *our* stockings!'

The two stared at their stockings, which they had hung at the ends of their beds. They hung limp and empty, with not a single toy. It was very, very disappointing.

'Well, I expect his adventure made him forget our stockings,' said the boy, at last. 'Never mind – we've shared in his adventure. Let's go to sleep.'

But, ah – what a surprise they are going to get in

the morning when they go to that cupboard that Father Christmas hid in! It's full of toys! A stockingful wasn't enough for those two kind children – Father Christmas wanted to leave them more than that!

And when they open that cupboard, out will come a train and a doll and a ship and a top and a book and a musical-box and a bear and a . . . well, almost everything you can think of.

Wouldn't I love to be there when they open the door! Good old Father Christmas, I hope he always finds kind children to help him when he's in trouble!