

CURLY AND FLOPPY TWISTYTAIL

THE FUNNY PIGGY BOYS

Chapter Twenty-Nine: The Piggies and Santa Claus

“Oh, so many things as I have for you to do today!” exclaimed Mrs. Twistytail, the pig lady, to her two boys, Flop Ear and Curly Tail, one morning. “Such a lot of work!”

“My!” exclaimed Flop Ear. “What is it, mamma? Have we wood to chop or water to bring in?”

“Oh, neither one,” said Mrs. Twistytail, with a smile, as she shook the crumbs off the tablecloth, for the family had just finished dinner. “I mean we have so many things yet to get for Christmas. There are plums to buy for the plum pudding, and the candy and nuts and oranges and figs and dates and the sour milk lollypops and everything that Santa Claus hasn’t time to bring.”

“Why!” exclaimed Baby Pinky, who was putting on her new lemonade-colored hair ribbon, “I thought Santa Claus brought everything.”

“No, not quite everything,” explained Mrs. Twistytail. “He brings all the presents, of course, but he lets the papas and mammas get the good things to eat, because different children like different things. You wouldn’t like, for instance, to have nothing but hickory nuts, or walnuts, or chestnuts in your stockings, would you, boys?”

“No, indeed!” exclaimed Curly Tail and Flop Ear together, just like twins, though they weren’t.

“For those things are for Billie and Johnny Bushytail, the squirrel boys,” went on Mrs. Twistytail. “And they wouldn’t like to have sour milk, and cold boiled potatoes, and the things that you like.

“So, as I say, there are lots of things for us to do to get ready for Christmas, and you boys will have to help me. I think today I’ll send you to the store for some raisins and citron and plums and other things to make puddings and pies.”

“Oh, goodie!” cried Flop Ear.

“And maybe we can clean out some of the cake and pie dishes after you get through baking,” suggested his brother.

“I think you may,” said their mamma.

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“But what can I do?” asked Baby Pinky, the littlest pig of them all. “Can I go to the store for anything?”

“You will stay home with me,” said Mrs. Twistytail, “and help me bake. Now, boys, you had better start, so as to get home before dark. Here are the things I want,” and she gave them a list written out on paper.

Oh! so many lovely victuals as there were! I can’t write about them, for I haven’t had my supper yet, and I’m so hungry, when I think of the good things, that I might even take a bite out of my typewriter, and then I couldn’t print any more stories for you, and that would be too bad for me.

Anyhow, there were many good things that Mrs. Twistytail wanted, and soon Curly and Flop were on their way to the store with a big basket.

They got them all, and they took sniffs and smells, though not so much as weenyteeny nibble of the Christmas things. But, oh! how they did wish the time would come when they might really eat them!

“What do you most want for Christmas?” asked Curly as he and his brother tramped on through the snow-covered woods.

“A toy steam engine,” replied Flop Ear. “And what do you want, Curly Tail?”

“A make-believe automobile.”

“I hope we get them,” went on Flop Ear with a sigh, and pretty soon, off in the woods, they heard a voice calling:

“Whoa, now! Stand still there, if you please. Some of the things are slipping off my sleigh, and I want to fasten them on. Whoa there, reindeer!”

“Listen to that, would you now!” whispered Curly Tail to his brother, as they hid down behind some bushes.

“Reindeer!” exclaimed Flop Ear. “There’s only one person who has reindeer and he is—”

“Santa Claus!” interrupted Curly Tail. “We’ve found Santa Claus, Floppy, and this is the best chance in the world to tell him what presents we want for Christmas!”

“That’s right,” agreed the other piggie boy. “We’ll speak to him,” and then they walked on

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a little farther and they saw the dear old saint himself, with his red coat, all trimmed with white fur, and his white beard, and he was as round and fat and jolly as anything.

“What ho! Hello!” cried Santa Claus, when he saw the piggie boys. “What are you doing here?”

“We are on our way home from buying Christmas things,” said Flop Ear. “But have you really Christmas presents there, Mr. Santa Claus?”

“I have indeed,” replied the jolly old saint, with a twinkle in his eyes. “But no one is allowed to see them until the right time. You see I am traveling about, measuring the sizes of different chimneys, so I can tell whether or not I can slide down them. Just as I got here some of the toys began to slip off the sleigh and I stopped to fasten them on. But I suppose you have your toys all picked out?”

“Yes,” replied Flop Ear. “I want a toy steam engine, and Curly wants a toy automobile.”

“Oh, my!” exclaimed Santa Claus, and his voice seemed rather sad.

“Why, what is the matter?” asked Curly.

“Alas,” said Santa Claus. “This year I have only one toy engine, and a poor little lame boy has asked for that in a letter he sent to me up the chimney the other night. And I have only one toy auto, and a little boy who has no papa or mamma, and who is very poor, has asked for that. I was going to give the toys to them, but since you have met me in the woods I must grant your request, since whoever meets Santa Claus face to face, can have just what they ask of him.

“But I know the little lame boy and the other poor little boy will be much disappointed. Still it can’t be helped. I will grant your wishes, Floppy and Curly, but—”

“Stop!” suddenly cried Flop Ear.

“Hold on!” exclaimed Curly Tail.

Then, somehow, into their hearts there came a feeling of sadness, and yet not so much sadness as gladness and happiness.

“I—I guess I don’t want a toy steam engine,” said Flop Ear. “Give it to the lame boy.”

“Good,” cried Santa Claus.

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“And I don’t need the toy auto very much,” went on Curly Tail. “Give it to the poor little boy.”

“Good!” cried Santa Claus again, and then his face seemed to shine like the sun, and there seemed to be wreaths of holly and bunches of mistletoe sticking all over him, and he sprang into his sleigh, the reindeer shook their horns, making the bells jingle like anything, and then, off on top of the snowflakes rode Santa Claus, calling back:

“All right, piggie boys, I won’t forget you, or any of the earth children. It will soon be Christmas, and if you don’t get autos or steam engines you’ll get something else,” and then he vanished from sight, and Flop Ear and Curly Tail went home, wondering very much at what had happened.

And in the next story, in case the telephone man doesn’t crawl through the water pipe and scare the window shutter so that it goes bang-bang all day, I’ll tell you about Flop Ear and the stockings.