

December 21, 1952

Few secrets are kept from this family. I sure find this when it comes a few days before Christmas. It is a problem to hide any gifts and not have snoopers. The only success I have had is to place unwrapped box with other similar objects and these escape scrutiny.

To send to the mail order firms for gifts is quite another problem and the package always arrives the day the person honored gets the mail and I am faced with a series of "little white lies" of which I am a poor narrator.

My face is an open book, and with a little study and questioning, anyone can learn my secrets; but I have lived so long in a misty atmosphere, I am easily fooled and everyone keeps secrets from me.

Yesterday, the family (Chet and Haysel) went shopping and came home with my gifts--they must be because I was rudely excluded from the excitement and told not to enter the upper bedchamber. I can wait a few more days. I'll show them.

They don't know what I have hidden in the most unthought of places and some in plain view, too. This is part of the fun of Christmas, the excitement and the intrigue.

The birth of the Christ child had all this excitement and intrigue, too; and one does not appreciate the wonderful story until they read in the pages of the Bible. The gifts brought to him are one book in itself and the flight to Egypt is another.

So this great celebration in a few days begins to get more exciting as it nears.

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December 22, 1952

Last minute details are beginning to pile up and each day adds more--at least, I can think of some new ones and wonder why I didn't have them scheduled.

Saw a picture in a magazine of some pretty Christmas cookies cut into shapes of trees, reindeer, wreaths, etc. and looked so interesting that I began to bake cookies and before I finished had eight dozen of assorted shapes and sizes.

I am sure when I finally get to dreaming tonight I will envision not sheep jumping over the fence; but all these frosted cookies, green, white, yellow, pink, red, and brown. For three hours I have been daubing gooey frosting onto these assorted shapes.

How I got so entangled into this messy job, I don't know; but once one gets that first little reindeer, or Christmas bell all frosted, it gets under the skin and you think how many youngsters would enjoy these goodies. I hope they do.

It's a mighty good thing we have a back bedroom that has a door which shuts; because this room has become a genuine catchall for all the last minute details involved with the gift giving.

I have a good feeling inside to be able to make and fix little remembrances for all our good friends and the youngsters; to show them we appreciate living amongst them.

To many the Christmas season is a nuisance; but it fills a lot of empty souls with a few days of good cheer (and I don't mean the intoxicating kind.)

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### December 23, 1952

I sometimes wonder about those of us humans, who forget about Christmas and push aside all the holiday festivities and turn a deaf ear to the wonders of this season. Do they enjoy life as much as we busy Santa's helpers?

For several long evenings I have been sending greeting cards and writing letters. If for no other reason I garnish pleasure from December, it is from the notes and letters and best wishes from our many friends. Most of them I only hear from this once in the year; and the spirit of good will is so inherent with Christmas, it is the best time to hear from and write to everyone.

It would be wonderful if the spirit of Christmas could only spill in to all the other months of the year; perhaps we would never have to worry about tolerance or international relations.

All these cards we sent are more than personal best wishes for this particular season, they are envoys of fellowship and friendship to all mankind. Somehow we feel a little closer to everyone and feel their joys and sorrows. The complaints of Christmas being commercialized are true; but the good it does well offsets the sin of its being exploited.

This is one month of the year the post office department climbs out of the red and the post masters can say they are really overworked; and our box well earns the rent we pay for it.

When the Christmas rush is over, all of us are a little worn around the fringes; but it's a good tired feeling and next year I will be ready to repeat the whole process.

The fellow who doesn't celebrate Christmas is left out in the cold--at least his heart is.

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### December 24, 1952

This day's diary is being written well beyond the month of December (I am ashamed to admit); but the excitement and work of last minute holiday details somehow took precedence over all other duties.

There were guests at our house the night of December 24th. The house had to be slicked up and its face scrubbed to shine with the lights on the Christmas tree. All the equipments (such as the typewriter) had to be shoved out of sight; thus, jobs, like diary keeping, were sidetracked.

The Christmas tree provided some live arguments. The youngest member of the household said it was a disgrace--not being as tall as the ceiling; but, I, contended it was very fitting for the crowded room. It was a fir not over three feet; and being a short tree, it had the privilege of standing on a table. This arrangement worked very well; gifts were piled around and under the tree; leaving space in the room for guests.

Youngsters are accused of being over anxious at Christmas; grown-ups are just the same. By seven p.m. everyone had asked, "When are we going to unwrap the gifts?" (Adults are just kids grown taller and wider.)

When the festivities were over and the last gift was bared of its holiday finery, the place overflowed with laughter, wrappings, and gifts. Each had his pile of loot and invited inspection; around the group each went to view the presents of Santa's labors.

Thus the eve of Christmas came and went at our house; leaving a new collection of boxes and wrappings for next year; and a wonderful warm feeling of love and good will to all. I am always sorry when the great event is over; and look forward to next year.

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#### December 25, 1952

This is the day to test some of the new gadgets received for Christmas. My kitchen gets its share of utensils and dishes and pot holders and aprons.

Before the dinner was begun, I found a home for the trivet and the new chopping block. It is with reluctance that I use these pretty new things--do I hate to mar the beauty of the polished wood or the gleaming metal?

With the aroma of the beef baking in the oven and the fresh pies, comes the perfume of the Christmas Cologne or the gift of fancy soap and shaving cream. All the gals will wear their new Christmas aprons and other finery. The menfolk will don the new fancy socks.

The conversation will somehow turn to "gifts". The boys will review the wonders of the gadgets they received--tools or drills; whatever it may be. At our house, until there are Grandchildren, there aren't any toys or dolls underfoot and the grown-ups can't wear out the wind up toys.

The day is filled with family conversation, too; mostly of "I remember when." And when I was a young one it was a different celebration, to be sure; which brings to mind many happy memories; otherwise lost if it were not for Christmas.

Perhaps the bright lights, the decorations, and the tinsel may seem pagan; but there must be some way to keep this wonderful occasion forever alive and it must have some glamour to it or the meaning would be lost.

A Merry Christmas to everyone and may the day live forever!

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December 26 & 27, 1952

(With apologies to Clement C. Moore, author of "Twas the Night Before Christmas.")

Twas the day after Christmas where all through the room  
Not a fixture was in place and paper was strewn.  
The stockings emptied, were draped everywhere;  
The poor Christmas tree hung liveless, limp, and bare.  
The children were yelling like wild Indians  
The older kids were stealing toys from the young ones.  
And Mama in her housecoat and I in my robe  
Thought the war was on this side of the globe.  
When out in the street there arose another clatter  
I sprang from the chair to see what was the matter.  
Over to the window I flew like a flash  
Pushed open the drapes to view the crash.  
The car at the curb was a teenager's dream  
Had the luster of new paint--two toned blue and cream.  
When to my wondering eyes there unfurls  
But a carload full of eight boys and girls--  
With a smiling driver so lively and quick  
I knew in a moment it was my brother Dick.  
More rapid than I blink his friends they came  
And he whistled and shouted and called them by name:  
"Hey, Willie; Oh Nancy! Now Billy, and Mary;  
Coming Don and Annie and Dianne and Jerry.  
My Sis will cook up some fancy nourishment--  
Ahoy my friends! Welcome to this old establishment."

Here was I unshaven--my wife's hair tied in pins;  
And all the little kids sporting silly grins.  
Into the sloven parlor shoved the merry group  
Stumbling over building blocks, cars, and a doll troupe.  
Their eyes how they stared at wife and I so aghast  
And drunk in the full scene of the Christmas blast.  
Now each year before Christmas I dream of this day  
I could sleep late and loll around the house this way.  
But some relatives spoils my days reverie  
Dragging in their friends to waste our cream and coffee.  
Or without invitation come all our kit and kin  
To spend the day and help our kids break their toys in.  
Next year when I hear Santa say, "To all Goodnight;"  
A big sign will be placed on our porch in plain sight  
It will be trimmed in red, white and printed black,  
"Visiting our kinfolk--January 2, be back." M. H.

(This should be enough for two days.)

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