

Kids Korner

Christmas Coming Of Baby Betsy

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Much to the surprise of everyone, baby Elizabeth — Betsy, for short — was born at great-grandma's big farmhouse long before daylight broke on Christmas morning.

When their new sister arrived three weeks early, Billy and Becky the 10-year old twins, were sound asleep in their guest room beds.

That's because the evening before, the twins had worked hard helping their parents and grandparents trim the fresh evergreen tree for great-grandma. They had strung lights, hung ornaments, wove garlands, and dropped tinsel for a festive family gathering that would be held on Christmas afternoon. Their cousins, aunts and uncles were coming.

Then they had nibbled popcorn and sipped rich homemade cocoa. They had fallen into bed with excited exhaustion.

But, suddenly, instead of sugar plums dancing in her head, Becky came wide awake. She had a very strong sense that something unusual was going on. She couldn't imagine what it might be.

In her flannel nightie, she slid out of bed and padded to the window. Morning light was just beginning to streak the sky and during the night, more snow had fallen.

Christmas Day, at last! An urgent rap on the door was from Billy. "Cmon Beck, race you to the Christmas tree," he said in a hushed whisper.

Instantly they were in flight toward the living room wishing they could have slid down the banister. But that would have destroyed its wrapping of greenery, bows, and berries.

Soon they were under the tree shifting presents left and right to find the ones with their own name on the label. Then Billy thought he heard quiet voices in the kitchen.

"Hey, Beck, listen. I hear something."

Sneaking through the dining room they pressed their ears to the dividing door.

"Well, Grandpa," they heard their grandma saying, "How do you feel now, any older? Are you surprised, you old dear?"

"Ho, ho, ho," laughed their grandpa. "It makes me feel younger, my lovely wife."

Billy and Becky screwed up their faces and giggled. Why did old folks talk so goofy?

"Oh, children, there you are,"



said Daddy, coming up from behind. Startled, they faced him, guiltily.

"There's a surprise in mother's room that we want you to see," he said, kissing them each on top of the head.

"But, Pop, it's Christmas, and you said we could open..."

"No buts, Billy. Come with me. You, too, Becky."

"Daddy, can't you just tell us what it is? Can't it wait until after presents...where's Mother, anyway...Daddy, do you think I got the Barbie I wanted?" Becky said, her words almost tumbling over each other.

They had just reached the stairs when a clatter of horses, dogs and jingle bells erupted outside. They pulled back the curtains and looked through the window.

A fellow dressed in red and white was in charge of a team of horses that was pulling a sleigh. He held the reins fast while a tall passenger in a dark overcoat and leather gloves sprang to the ground from his seat. In the man's hand was a black bag.

"Daddy, who is that man and what's he doing here?" the twins asked as the fellow waded snow to the front door.

"If those were reindeer instead of horses, I would definitely say the driver is Santa Claus," their grandpa chuckled, on his way to greet the man and let him in.

"Santa Claus? Really?"

"No, but there is a special reason why we were hoping the doctor could pay us a visit, provided he could find transportation over these snow drifts."

"Doctor? Why is he here?"

Billy wanted to know. "Dont tell me great-granny is sick? What about the pumpkin pies she always makes for us?"

"Is he one of our relatives Daddy?" Becky asked, with curiosity.

Just then a man's voice rang out: "Surprise, everyone...Merry Christmas...I'm here at last." The door was shut and he was stomping snow off his boots and setting them on the mat to drip dry. The twins stared while the man's overcoat was hung on the hall tree.

Just then, great grandmother, herself, appeared, demanding to know what all the racket was about. When she recognized the doctor, she said, sternly: "Oh, it's you, is it? Well, its about time..."

Daddy said: "Doctor, I am on my way upstairs with Billy and Becky. They haven't seen the surprise yet. They don't know what it is."

Suddenly, everybody stopped talking because from somewhere above them the cry of a newborn baby was heard. The twins eyes grew round with astonishment as they looked at their father for an explanation.

"Children, you have a new baby sister. Her name is Elizabeth — Betsy, for short."

"Oh, Daddy," cried Becky, with eyes that were misting over with happiness. "A baby sister?"

"Wow, that's really cool," Billy said, grinning from ear to ear.

Sweet Betsy had a tiny beautiful nose. The wee figure wrapped tightly in a pink and white flannel blanket looked so precious and peaceful.

"We love you Mother. This is the best Christmas, ever."

WINTER SPORTS

Whether you have snow on the ground or just wish you did, these sites will give you all the scoop on winter fun

On-line sports center. The myteam.com site is the on-line source for all amateur sports—winter and summer. The site includes a news section, tips on playing all kinds of sports and the history of more than 100 sports
<http://www.myteam.com/ysnim/home/index.jsp>

Snowboarding. The highlight of this site is the spectacular photos of snowboarders. In addition, you can read information on the history of the sport
<http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Bungalow/2764/>

Ice Skating International. If you ice-skate or enjoy watching it, this site's for you. It has a big photo gallery, rankings in competitions and a schedule of events
<http://www.iceskatingintl.com/>

Winter sports and more. This site includes information on everything from snowboarding to keeping warm when you go winter camping to buying sports gear
<http://www.adventuresports.com/index/skidir.htm>

Salt Lake City 2002. Visit the site of the organizing committee for the winter international games. Read all about the mascots—a rabbit, coyote and bear. Then check out the puzzles and other fun stuff in the KIDS section
<http://www.slc2002.org/>

California snow report. If you enjoy snowboarding, skiing or both, you'll enjoy this site, which includes information for all ages. The site has great photos and details on where you can enjoy winter sports in California and how fun winter sports can be for the whole family
<http://www.californiasnow.com/>

Ski tips. This Waterville Valley resort site has a question and answer section to help with your skiing
<http://www.waterville.com/winter/tipslibrary.html>

Montana winters. In addition to promoting Montana and its winter fun, the site includes facts on a wide variety of winter sports. Just some of the sports you can find out about include ice fishing, ice climbing, ski touring and snowshoeing. And there are safety tips, too
<http://www.wintermt.com/winter.htm>

U.S. luge team. Meet the members of the U.S. Luge Team and check out the photos of the latest luge season. The site also includes information on the complex where the team trains.
<http://www.usaluge.org/>

Canadian Ski Museum. Take a virtual tour of the museum, which includes a Canadian skiers Hall of Fame, photos of skiing then and now, and more
<http://skimuseum.ottawa.com/>

Aspen activities. Check out the snow conditions in Aspen, Colorado, or get the local view on winter sports. Best of all, with the Mountain Cams, you can see the mountain/snow conditions. The pictures are updated every 10 minutes, and the cameras operate from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mountain Time
<http://www.skiaspen.com>

Canadian figure skating. Read about the athletes involved in skating, find out who's in the Hall of Fame and get a schedule of upcoming events
<http://www.cfsa.ca/>

Dog sledding. History, trivia and much more are all part of this site about the famous Iditarod race in Alaska. The Student's Playground section has information on the mushers, the people part of the race, games and more
<http://www.iditarod.com/>

Please note: This list only applies to the sites listed, not to any sites that may be linked. Web sites change constantly. At the time this article was written, these Web addresses worked. Some of the sites may call for software you do not have. You can still look at much of the information on the site, but you may need the software for movies. If you do need software, be sure to have your parent(s) read any software agreements before you download it.

Grow A Crystal Snowflake Overnight

1. Using a pipe cleaner cut into thirds, twist the three pieces together in the middle to form a snowflake shape. Tie a string onto one point of the snowflake.

2. In a wide-mouthed jar or bowl, dissolve borax in boiling water at the ratio of three tablespoons of borax to one cup of water. (You can also add a drop of blue food color if you wish.)

3. Tie the end of the string on the snowflake to a pencil. Suspend the snowflake into the container with the dissolved borax mixture, allowing the pencil to stretch across the opening. (Make sure there is enough liquid to cover the

snowflake.) Leave the container with the snowflake suspended sitting out overnight.

When you wake up in the morning you will be surprised! These snowflakes can be displayed in your window for a sparkly winter decoration.

