## Christmas Invitation

---By Katherine Edelman

JACK TRESLAR hunched his bony hand motioning of the shadowed half big chair, turning a new page of his book. He was reading a Christmas as he followed. Here he was—alone sorbed in the tale.

A strange voice responded to his "hello." "I hate to bother you on Christmas ave Mr. Trank on A deed silence it all about?" Christmas eve, Mr. Treslar. But I'm ringing up to ask if it would be possible for you to come and spend My name is the same based back unflinchingly.

inistake. "I want you!" the low voice was magic. He spoke quietly. emphatic. "Will you come or not?" Jack repressed a quick exclama-Christmas-". he began.

ruld be side-tracked easily." Jack thought of the lonely Christ-

mas he had been anticipating. Aft- terrupted.



He ascended the steps leading to the massive door.

er all, there might be something to

Jack Trester was speeding along the grouted highway to Richmond. Fol-

full family size

lowing the defailed instructions that had been given him, Jack found the long winding drive leading from the roadway. What a secluded, ghostly place, he thought, as he drove under the snow-sprinkled trees.

BEVAN WILLERS was waiting. In the dim light from the chandelier, his tail bent figure seemed gro-tesque. "I have let the servants away for the evening," he said, his bony hand motioning toward the end

story, trying hard to become ab in the house with this strange old man. Anything could happen. There A sharp ring from the telephone brought him to his feet. Who could blocks. Then, his adventurous spirbe calling him on Christmas ever it reasserted itself, and he looked

Then a hearty laugh rang through Bevan Willers. I live out at Richmond. I have a big home, and—"

Then a hearty laugh rang through the library. With amazement Jack the library. With amazement Jack the library. saw the old man straighten up in "But-but I don't even know you, his chair. Years seemed to fall off Mr. Willers. There must be some his shoulders. The twisted, grotesque appearance vanished as if by

"I'm not crazy," he began; "I'm just a lonely old fellow, ticketed as tion. "I-I had thought of spending a sort of recluse. The true facts are that I've been trying for years "Wouldn't it be possible to change to write. Yesterday I got word that your plans? I have a feeling they a story of mine had been accepted." "But I still don't understand your

strange invitation, and--" Jack in-

"I'm coming to that," Bevan Wil-iers continued. "The hero of my book is a daring, adventurous fellow. A man willing to answer a strange call that came in the night. I got intrigued with the fellow, and began thinking. Wondering if there was any young fellow who would act as he had done. So I rang the first hotel that came to mind and described my hero. Young, unmarried, interesting sort of chap. Pretended his name had slipped my mind for the moment. They connected me with your room. You know the rest."

Jack stretched out his long arm across the desk, and gripped the old man's hand. "Now that I'm here, Mr. Willers, do you still believe you have got the right man." There was wistful entreaty in his dark eyes. "I don't just think -- I'm absolute-

Christmas Tree Useful

During Rest of Winter "You are right about my plans," AMHERST, MASS -In northern admitted. "They are rather in otates where Christmas heralds the AMHERST, MASS -- In northern he air. But-but going to spend coming of cold winter weather, the istimes with an utter stranger tree that warms the living room De-"That's why I thought you might balance of the winter outdoors. Account." There was a note of disap cording to Arnold M. Davis, extentment in Bevan Willers' voice. sion horticulturist at Massachusetts polishment in Beyon Willets votes, state college, fir trees can make excellent "feeding stations" for birds Jack thought again of the lonely and offer them cozy shelter on frosty winter nights. Suet is aften tied to he could debate the question, he the branches. The tree is also used eard a voice inside of him answer- to protect climbing plants, or the ing, calling through the wire to Richman, "You got the right man, Mr. Willers. I'm coming."

An hour later, bathed and dressed, Tack Specific and the tree handy as windbreaks.

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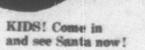
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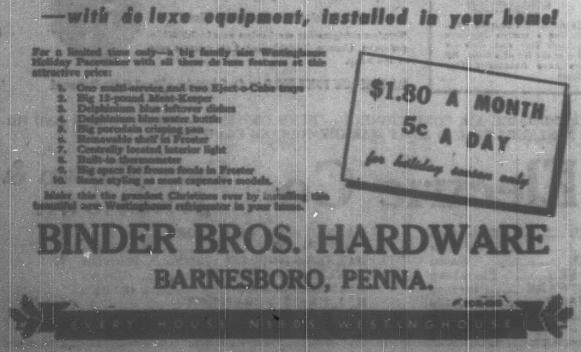












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