

“Christmas Leads Us Home” Sample Pages #02

written by Fred Passmore, copyright Sheep Laughs Records

Actions during the next paragraph: *The kids sit down again, all smiles and chattering, ready for "Santa" to arrive. After a few moments, the voice of "Santa" is heard, and the room breaks out in shrieks of excitement from the kids. The red-suited visitor comes in with a bag slung over his shoulder, waving to the kids who swarm him, jumping up and down and all trying to talk to him at the same time. After wishing everyone "Merry Christmas!" he motions for everyone to settle down, and the kids back away, sitting down and forming a circle around him as he puts the bag down on the floor. The adults are all smiles as he opens the bag and begins to hand out the presents, looking at each package and calling out the name on the tag. The children raise their hand in response to their name, and each one is handed their present, which they thank him for and hold in their laps until all are passed out. As this is happening, Trudy looks around for Cassie, and not seeing her, gets up and makes her way to the door. She steps out, looking for her. While she is gone, the kids open their presents, each one holding it up with happiness to show what it is.*

Narrator #2: (Trudy) The presentation over, everyone applauded the kids as they sat down again, all smiles with the double excitement of the applause and knowing what was coming soon. The happy tension grew from moment to moment as the kids chattered together about what they were hoping to get when the expected visitor arrived. It should be said that the older kids knew --or at least suspected-- that it was only Uncle Clyde playing Santa's helper, but it didn't matter since they got a present anyway; however, the younger kids believed it was really the man himself, and it was in their eyes that one could glimpse the magic of Christmas again. Knowing that the visitor was about to arrive, the rest of the family came in from the kitchen, except of course for Uncle Clyde. And, at length, the moment finally came when a familiar booming laugh echoed through the hallway, triggering a tumult of screams and leaps from the children. The noise level increased dramatically as the man in red entered, a large sack slung over his shoulder. After a moment, he managed to successfully get everyone to settle down, and they sat down in a circle around him as he set down the bag in the middle. Taking out the first gift, he read the name in a deep voice, and handed to the child when they raised their hand. This was repeated for each child, and we adults enjoyed it as much or more than they did. As this went on, I suddenly realized that Cassie had not yet come back from stepping outside for what I assumed was a smoke break. But it had been too long and now she was missing Uncle Clyde's... I mean, "Santa's" visit. So while the presents were being handed out, I went looking for our young prodigal.

Actions during the next paragraph: *The Christmas music plays here, underscoring the gift opening for about 30 seconds. After a few moments, Trudy comes back in, with a worried expression, and makes her way over to where she was sitting. The kids have just finished opening their presents, and Santa's helper prepares to leave, picking up his bag. But as he does, he pauses, weighing the bag as he holds it. He puts it back down, saying that it is not quite empty. The kids all look around at each other, wondering what might be in there, and who it belongs to. He takes out a flat package, and reads the name, which is Trudy's. She expresses surprise, since the presents are traditionally only for the kids.*

Narrator #2: Well, my instincts had proven correct; Cassie was not outside on the porch. But as I had gone looking, I caught a glimpse of a car racing away that I recognized as belonging to one of her friends. Obviously she had called her to come pick her up when she went outside. I mentally kicked myself for not recognizing that possibility when I had distractedly given her permission to leave the family gathering for a few moments. As I sat back down, my thoughts a million miles away, I saw that the kids had all opened their presents and I had missed it. Of course, these small gifts were from Santa, as far as the kids were concerned; the rest from their parents would be found under the tree in the morning. As our disguised Uncle Clyde picked up his bag to leave, he paused, and after a moment put it down, seeming to have felt that there was still one more in the bag. As he took it out and held it up, the

kids wondered to whom it belonged; all of them had gotten one already.

Actions during the next paragraph: *Everyone watches as he reads the name on the card and solemnly hands the present to Trudy. "Santa" turns and moves to the side as she opens it wonderingly. It is a framed photo of her son, and when she sees it, she smiles broadly, turning it and showing it around so that all can see, then rests it in her lap and puts a hand to her mouth as she starts to cry a little, because he is not here in person. She expresses thanks, and shares that she wishes he were here in person. "Santa" steps toward her again, and removes his hat, and then the beard to reveal it is her son in person! The actual Uncle Clyde steps into the room then with a grin as he reveals his part in the surprise. Staring at her son for a moment in shock and disbelief, his mother is finally overcome with emotion as he embraces her tightly. Everyone in the room is likewise surprised at the revelation, and after a moment they all gather around the young man, greeting him and hugging him, patting him on the back, etc.*

Narrator #2: When the jolly old elf read the gift tag, it took me a moment to realize that the name he called out was mine. I was puzzled since the gifts were usually only for the kids, but on everyone's urging, as they were curious to see what it was, I opened the gift wrapping to reveal a framed photo of my son, Trent. It was a new photo of him in uniform that I had never seen before, and I realized that he must have sent it with instructions that I be given it at the family party. As I showed his handsome picture around proudly, I was suddenly overcome with emotion, as I thought that, as wonderful as the present was, it only made his absence that much more painful. I told our family Santa that I appreciated the photo, but if I had one Christmas wish, it would be for him to be here in person. As I looked at the photo and held it close, a murmur spread around the gathered group as Santa took off his hat and then removed his beard. The gasp that went up then was echoed by my own as I looked up and beheld with disbelieving eyes *the same face in the frame*. The man behind the beard was not Uncle Clyde, but my own beloved Trent! Unable to accept what was happening, I saw Clyde step into the room with a sly grin, giving away his part in the charade. Then Trent stepped forward and hugged me, releasing me from my paralysis, and unleashing from me a scream of joy and a torrent of happy tears. *(The music carries the moment here.)*

Actions during the next paragraph: *After the dramatic music underscores the reunion, the young man steps back and takes off the big red coat, showing that he is wearing his army fatigues under it. As he chats with the family, he fans himself with a hymnal to cool off after baking in the hot costume. He speaks to his mother as he looks around for his sister, and she tells him she is not here. Gladys tells everyone that dinner is ready, which brings a round of applause and cheers (**done live**). Everyone lines up to go into the next room, and when they are gone, the lights go down on that side of the stage and come back up on the nursing home side of the set; OR a stage hand moves the curtain over from the nursing home set over to cover the living room side.*

Narrator #2: At last, after several moments of holding onto each other, Trent removed the big red coat to reveal his army fatigues, prompting everyone in the room to gather around us, and it was hugs all around as everyone welcomed him home. Looking around for his sister, my son inquired as to her whereabouts, as he was anxious to see her. I had to explain to his disappointment that she had slipped out earlier to party with friends. He told me that he would be home through Christmas Day, and he would see her when she got back in. I knew she would be thrilled to see him, but I also knew she would be upset because she had missed the surprise revelation and the rest of the party with him here. The fact that Cassie was not here was a thorn in my thoughts, but I had to leave her in God's hands. My son was home, and nothing would dampen my joy and excitement. This truly was the happiest Christmas I could ever hope for. God had answered my heart's desire in one area tonight, and faith arose in my heart that he would fulfill the others, if I would put my trust in Him completely and leave my children to His care and love.