

"The Christmas Family" Sample Pages #04
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(Actions during the next part of narrative: Daniel begins to stir, wiping his face as if clearing his eyes of tears. He swivels his chair to better see the top of the Christmas tree, where he gazes on the star on the top of the tree. Then, when he hears something as described below, he turns down the radio and looks toward the other door.)

Narrator: As the music began to play, and the images in my mind gave way to the lights of the Christmas tree my eyes had been trained on, I understood for the first time that Christmas was truly a time for celebration... not just because of the gifts, or the parties, but because eternity, heaven, God Himself had broken in on the world. A miracle, that had really happened, that showed that there was more to life than just living, working, and dying. I came to realize that there was more to my life than what I had seen so far. And although I had no earthly family, that maybe it was possible to belong to a bigger family, one that included even someone like me.

(Actions during the next part of narrative: Daniel's head pops up as he hears a noise outside the other door. As it becomes louder, he rolls his chair over toward the door.)

Now, sitting there quietly, with such deep thoughts occupying my mind, I was in no way prepared for what happened next. I thought I heard... something coming from the emergency exit that led to the back of the building. Turning down the radio, I cocked my head to listen. When outside the door there arose such a clatter, that I rolled my chair over to see what was the matter.

(Actions during the next part of narrative: Mr. Clements somewhat clumsily enters with a large box of wrapped gifts. He is startled to see Daniel there.)

When what to my wondering eyes should appear, but a man dressed as Santa, who worked here all year!

It was Mr. Clements, the old janitor and groundskeeper, dressed up as St. Nick, as he did every year. I guess he wasn't expecting to see me there, because as he brought in an box load of presents, he nearly dropped them when he spied me. Then he got into character and tried to cover it up.

"Well, what have we here?" he said in a booming put-on Santa voice. "A boy who's not where he should be!"

"I couldn't go out caroling with the others this year," I told him with a grin. He was the skinniest Santa you ever did see, and a bit flustered at being caught.

"Ho, ho, ho" he said. "Santa is just bringing the presents for all you kids here at the children's home."

"I know it's you, Mr. Clements," I said. "No need to be Santa when it's just me here." This took him aback, and he said, "You know?"

"For the last three years," I said as I nodded. "I think most of the kids know."

He seemed a little deflated by this, so I quickly added, "But they all love you for being Santa's helper."

This picked him back up some, so he smiled and placed the boxes under the tree as I watched. He picked up one and help it up, saying, "This one's for you... I wonder what it is?"

"I doubt you could fit a home in that little box, Mr. Clements," I said with a touch of the returning sadness.

Mr. Clements put down the box, and came over to kneel beside me. "Aw, now son, don't you worry none about that. Your time will come. One day you'll look back on this, and you'll think, "I kinda miss all them people there at the children's home now that I'm out of there." Cause although we might not be blood kin, we're still family. We all love you, and love takin' care of you, until someone else comes along to raise you as their own, or you grow up and don't need us any more."

I'm embarrassed to say that I got a little choked up at that. It's true, he was just a gardener and janitor, but at that moment he was a lot more to me. He misted up a little too, and patted me on the shoulder. If I looked upon Dr. Spencer as a father-figure, Mr. Clements was the kindly old Grandfather-figure.

"As he stood, he said, "Well, I'd best get busy, the little 'uns will be back soon, and I've got to have all this ready and then come back in when they do. But remember, Daniel, home is where you find it. We're all related through Adam, and we Christians are related through Jesus. Did you know I spent some years here when I was a little boy, just like you?"